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Volume 10

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Number 1

Tennessee Williams: Dramatist of Frustration

JOHN GASSNER¹

IN AN addendum written in March, 1944, for the published text of *Battle of Angels*, Tennessee Williams affirmed his allegiance to the plastic medium of the theater. "I have never for a moment doubted that there are people—millions!—to say things to," he concluded. "We come to each other, gradually, but with love. It is the short reach of my arms that hinders, not the length and multiplicity of theirs. With love and with honesty, the embrace is inevitable."² When *The Glass Menagerie* reached Broadway one year later, on March 31, 1945, the embrace was consummated. The thirty-one-year-old southern playwright met and won his audience, and the planet's most formidable band of critics awarded him the New York Drama Critics' Circle prize for the best American play of the 1944-45 season. If in the fall of 1945 a second occasion for an embrace, his earlier-written dramatization of a D. H. Lawrence story under the title *You Touched Me*,³ proved less ardent, it was

still an encounter with a well-disposed public that patronized the play for several months. Two years later, moreover, *A Streetcar Named Desire* quickly took its place after the Broadway *première* on December 3, 1947, as the outstanding American drama of several seasons, holding its own even against so strong a rival as *Mister Roberts* and winning a second Drama Critics' Circle award as well as the Pulitzer Prize. By common consent its author is the foremost new playwright to have appeared on the American scene in a decade, and our theater capital is at present eagerly awaiting *Summer and Smoke*, concerning which reports have been glowing ever since Margo Jones produced it in Dallas in the summer of 1947.

I

All was not well when Tennessee Williams predicted an inevitable embrace between himself and the theater, and a less resolute young man might hastily have retreated from the battlefield of the stage. After having written four unsatisfactory and unproduced full-length plays by 1940, he had seemed to be riding on the crest of the wave when *Battle of Angels* was put into production by the Theatre Guild in the fall of that year. A

¹ Chairman of the playwriting department, New School for Social Research, and Queens College. Author of *Masters of the Drama*, *Producing the Play*, etc.

² *Pharos*, spring, 1945, p. 121.

³ In making this dramatization Tennessee Williams had collaborated with a friend, Donald Windham.



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Tennessee Williams: Dramatist of Frustration

JOHN GASSNER¹

IN AN addendum written in March, 1944, for the published text of *Battle of Angels*, Tennessee Williams affirmed his allegiance to the plastic medium of the theater. "I have never for a moment doubted that there are people—millions!—to say things to," he concluded. "We come to each other, gradually, but with love. It is the short reach of my arms that hinders, not the length and multiplicity of theirs. With love and with honesty, the embrace is inevitable."² When *The Glass Menagerie* reached Broadway one year later, on March 31, 1945, the embrace was consummated. The thirty-one-year-old southern playwright met and won his audience, and the planet's most formidable band of critics awarded him the New York Drama Critics' Circle prize for the best American play of the 1944-45 season. If in the fall of 1945 a second occasion for an embrace, his earlier-written dramatization of a D. H. Lawrence story under the title *You Touched Me*,³ proved less ardent, it was

still an encounter with a well-disposed public that patronized the play for several months. Two years later, moreover, *A Streetcar Named Desire* quickly took its place after the Broadway *première* on December 3, 1947, as the outstanding American drama of several seasons, holding its own even against so strong a rival as *Mister Roberts* and winning a second Drama Critics' Circle award as well as the Pulitzer Prize. By common consent its author is the foremost new playwright to have appeared on the American scene in a decade, and our theater capital is at present eagerly awaiting *Summer and Smoke*, concerning which reports have been glowing ever since Margo Jones produced it in Dallas in the summer of 1947.

I

All was not well when Tennessee Williams predicted an inevitable embrace between himself and the theater, and a less resolute young man might hastily have retreated from the battlefield of the stage. After having written four unsatisfactory and unproduced full-length plays by 1940, he had seemed to be riding on the crest of the wave when *Battle of Angels* was put into production by the Theatre Guild in the fall of that year. A

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² *Pharos*, spring, 1945, p. 121.

³ In making this dramatization Tennessee Williams had collaborated with a friend, Donald Windham.

group of his one-acters, aptly entitled *American Blues*, since their scene was the depression period, had won a small cash award from the Group Theatre in 1939. He had received a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship and had been given a scholarship to an advanced playwrights' seminar at the New School for Social Research in February, 1940, by Theresa Helburn and John Gassner. Since both instructors were associates of the Theatre Guild, they submitted their student's play to the Guild when he showed them a draft of *Battle of Angels* at the end of the semester. The play went into rehearsal under excellent auspices, with Margaret Webster as director and Miriam Hopkins as the leading lady. But the results were catastrophic when the play opened in Boston. The play concluded melodramatically with a conflagration, which the stage manager, previously warned that he was weakening the effect by his chary use of the smokepots, decided to make thoroughly realistic. An audience already outraged by examples of repressed sexuality in a southern community was virtually smoked out of the theater, and Miss Hopkins had to brush away waves of smoke from her face in order to respond to the trickle of polite applause that greeted the fall of the curtain. The reviewers were lukewarm at best, and soon Boston's Watch and Ward Society began to make itself heard. The Theatre Guild withdrew the play after the Boston tryout and sent a hasty apology to its subscribers. The author, who had lost an unusual opportunity to make his mark in the theater, became once more, as he put it, that "most common American phenomenon, the rootless wandering writer," who ekes out a living by doing odd jobs. He was ushering in a movie theater for a weekly wage of seventeen dollars when Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer took him out to Culver City along

with other young hopefults. The studio promptly forgot about him after his submission of an outline for a screenplay that contained the germ of *The Glass Menagerie*, wrote him off as just another bad penny in Hollywood's expensive slot-machine, and dismissed him at the end of his six months' term.

If his prospects seemed bleak in the early months of 1944, Tennessee Williams nevertheless had reasons for self-confidence. He had been sufficiently inured to straitened circumstances during his youth, especially while pursuing his studies at the University of Missouri, Washington University, and the University of Iowa. His education had even been interrupted by two years of depressing employment as a clerk for a shoe company. His later apprenticeship to the writing profession had included desultory work as a bellhop in a New Orleans hotel, as a typist for engineers in Jacksonville, Florida, and as a waiter and reciter of verses in a Greenwich Village night club. He also knew the direction he was taking and had, in fact, already covered some of the road, having absorbed considerable experience and poured out a good deal of it in the remarkable one-act plays later collected under the title of *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*.⁴ He was developing a precise naturalism, compounded of compassion and sharp observation and filled with some of those unsavory details that Boston had found offensive but that Williams considered a necessary part of the truth to which he had dedicated himself. He was certain that, although he had written poetry⁵ and short stories, his métier was the theater because he found himself continually think-

⁴ *New Directions*, 1945.

⁵ *Five Young American Poets* (*New Directions*, 1939). A collection of Williams' short stories, *One Arm and Other Stories*, is scheduled for publication in 1948.

ing in terms of sound, color, and movement and had grasped the fact that the theater was something more than written language: "The turbulent business of my nerves demanded something more animate than written language could be."⁶ He was also moving toward a fusion of the most stringent realism with symbolism and poetic language wherever such writing seemed dramatically appropriate.

Above all, Williams was ready to carve out plays that would be as singular as their author. Although one may surmise that he was much affected by Chekhov and D. H. Lawrence and possibly by Faulkner, he drew too much upon his own observation to be actually imitative. Nor did he fall neatly into the category of social and polemical dramatists who dominated the theater of the 1930's, even if his experience of the depression inclined him toward the political left. His interest was primarily in individuals rather than in social conditions. His background alone would have distinguished him from urban playwrights like Odets, Arthur Miller, and Lillian Hellman, who were attuned to political analysis and regarded personal problems under the aspect of social conditioning. By comparison with his radical contemporaries, this Mississippi-born descendant of Tennessee pioneers (he was born in Columbus on March 26, 1914) was insular and had been conventionally reared and educated. His father, formerly a salesman in the delta region, was the sales manager of a shoe company in St. Louis, and his maternal grandfather was an Episcopalian clergyman. Cities appalled Williams. He disliked St. Louis, where he spent his boyhood, and he never felt acclimated to New York. His inclinations, once he felt free to wander, took him to Florida, Taos, Mexico, or the

Latin Quarter of New Orleans, where he still maintains an apartment. The pattern of his behavior established itself early in his life, and it was marked by a tendency to isolate himself, to keep his individuality inviolate, and to resort to flight whenever he felt hard-pressed.

II

The one-act plays which first drew attention to Williams foreshadow his later work both thematically and stylistically. The first to be published, *Moony's Kid Don't Cry*,⁷ presents a factory worker who longs to swing an ax in the Canadian woods, a carefree youth who doesn't hesitate to buy his month-old baby a ten-dollar hobbyhorse when he still owes money to the maternity hospital. Moony, whose effort to escape is effectively scotched by his practical wife, is a prototype of the restive young heroes of *Battle of Angels* and *The Glass Menagerie*. The sturdy one-acter *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* gives a foretaste of the rowdy humor that was to prove troublesome in *Battle of Angels* and was to establish a fateful environment for the heroine of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The pungent naturalism of Erskine Caldwell and William Faulkner is very much in evidence in this extravaganza about a cotton-gin owner who loses his wife to the man whose cotton gin he burned down in order to acquire his business. *The Purification*, a little tragedy of incest and Spanish "honor," reveals Williams' poetic power and theatrical imagination, and *The Long Goodbye* anticipates *The Glass Menagerie* with its retrospective technique.

Most noteworthy, however, are those evidences of compassion for life's waifs which transfigure crude reality in the one-acters. Pity glows with almost un-

⁶ *Pharos*, spring, 1945, p. 110.

⁷ *The Best One-Act Plays of 1940*, ed. Margaret Mayorga (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1941).

bearable intensity in the red-light district atmosphere of *Hello from Bertha*, in which an ailing harlot loses her mind. Pity assumes a quiet persuasiveness in the vignette, *Lord Byron's Love Letter*, in which two women's pathetic poverty is revealed by their effort to subsist on donations from Mardi Gras tourists to whom they display a letter from Byron; and Williams is particularly affecting in his treatment of battered characters who try to retain shreds of their former respectability in a gusty world. Self-delusion, he realizes, is the last refuge of the hopelessly defeated, and he studies its manifestations in *The Portrait of a Madonna* with such clinical precision that this one-acter would be appalling if it were less beautifully written. Its desiccated heroine, who imagines herself being violated by an invisible former admirer and who plays the southern belle of her girlhood by bandying charming talk with imaginary beaux, is almost as memorable a character as Blanche Du Bois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams would like to grant these unfortunates the shelter of illusions, and it pains him to know that the world is less tender. Mrs. Hardwick-Moore of *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion* is the butt of her landlady, who jibes at the poor woman's social pretensions and at her invention of a Brazilian rubber plantation, from which her income is incomprehensibly delayed. Only a fellow-boarder, a writer nearly as impoverished as Mrs. Hardwick-Moore, is charitable enough to realize that "there are no lies but the lies that are stuffed in the mouth by the hard-knuckled hand of need" and to indulge her increasingly reckless fabrication as she locates the plantation only a short distance from the Mediterranean but near enough to the Channel for her to distinguish the cliffs of Dover on a clear morning.

It is quite apparent that Williams was

nearly fully formed in these short plays as a painter of a segment of the American scene, a dramatist of desire and frustration, and a poet of the human compensatory mechanism. It is a curious fact about American playwriting that, like O'Neill, Paul Green, Odets, and Irwin Shaw, Williams should have unfolded his talent in the one-act form.

III

When the young author wrote *Battle of Angels*, the first of the full-length plays to attract a Broadway management, he was on less securely charted territory. He did not yet know his way through the maze of a plot sustained for an entire evening. He was so poorly guided in the revisions he made for the Theatre Guild that the play as produced was inferior to the script that had been accepted, and he also appears to have been fixed on D. H. Lawrence somewhat too strongly at this stage to be able to master the play's problems. *Battle of Angels* is unsatisfactory even in the revision published in 1945, which differs in several respects from the play that failed in Boston, for it lacks the Wagnerian conflagration climax, stresses the note of social protest in one scene, and employs a prologue and epilogue as makeshift devices. He had plainly tried to throw together too many of the elements he had dramatized separately in his best one-acters. He brought his vagabond hero, Val Xavier, into a decayed town, involved him with a frenzied aristocratic girl, grouped an assorted number of repressed matrons and unsympathetic townsmen around him, and made him fall in love with the frustrated wife of a storekeeper dying of cancer. He not only made the mistake of multiplying dramatic elements instead of fusing them but piled up fortuitous situations, such as the arrival of an avenging fury in the shape of a woman

from whom he had escaped and the killing of the wife, Myra, by the jealous storekeeper—a murder for which Val is innocently lynched. Williams, moreover, made the mistake of offering an ill-defined cross between a provincial vagrant and a D. H. Lawrence primitive as an example of purity of spirit. A somewhat ill-digested romanticism would have vitiated the play even if its dramaturgy had been firmer.

Battle of Angels, nevertheless, contained some of his most imaginative dialogue and memorable character-drawing. Myra is a rounded portrait, and Williams has yet to improve upon his secondary character, Vee Talbot. Vee painted the Twelve Apostles as she saw them in visions, only to have them identified as "some man around Two River County," and paints the figure of Christ, only to discover that she has drawn Val Xavier. If Williams had been able to exercise restraint, he could have made his mark in 1940 instead of having to wait five years.

He did achieve simplification with his next work, *You Touched Me*, a comedy in which a Canadian soldier liberates a girl from her musty British environment and the mummifying influence of a spinster. But here he was working with another writer's material, paying an overdue debt to D. H. Lawrence. The lack of personal observation was apparent in this competent dramatization; the play did not bear his own special signature of anguish. Even simplification had to become a highly personal achievement in Williams' case. Only when this transpired in *The Glass Menagerie* was there no longer any doubt that the theater had acquired a new dramatist.

IV

The plays that thrust Tennessee Williams into the limelight have much in

common besides their clear focus and economical construction. Both *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* transmute the base metal of reality into theatrical and, not infrequently, verbal poetry, and both supplement the action with symbolic elements of mood and music. A major theme is southern womanhood helpless in the grip of the presently constituted world, while its old world of social position and financial security is a *Paradise Lost*. But differences of emphasis and style make the two dramas distinct.

The Glass Menagerie is a memory play evoked in the comments of a narrator, the poet Tom, who is now in the merchant marine, and in crucial episodes from his family life. The form departs from the "fourth wall" convention of realistic dramaturgy and suggests Japanese Noh-drama, in which story consists mostly of remembered fragments of experience. If Williams had had his way with the Broadway production, *The Glass Menagerie* would have struck its public as even more unconventional, since his text calls for the use of a screen on which pictures and legends are to be projected. Disregarded by the producer-director Eddie Dowling, these stage directions nevertheless appear in the published play. They strike the writer of this article as redundant and rather precious; the young playwright was straining for effect without realizing that his simple tale, so hauntingly self-sufficient, needs no adornment.

As plainly stated by Tom, the background is a crisis in society, for the depression decade is teetering on the brink of the second World War. His tale belongs to a time "when the huge middle-class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind," when "their eyes had failed them, or they had failed their eyes, and so they were having their fin-

gers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy," while in Spain there was Guernica. But his memory invokes his home life and the provocations that finally sent him to sea. In episodes softened by the patina of time and distance he recalls the painful shyness of his lovable crippled sister, Laura, and the tragicomic efforts of his mother, Amanda, to marry her off, as well as his own desperation as an underpaid shoe-company clerk. The climax comes when, nagged by the desperate mother, Tom brings Laura a "gentleman caller" who turns out to be engaged to another girl.

Without much more story than this, Williams achieved a remarkable synthesis of sympathy and objectivity by making three-dimensional characters out of Tom's family and the gangling beau, who is trying to pull himself out of the rut of a routine position and recover his self-esteem as a schoolboy success. The carping mother could have easily become a caricature, especially when she remembers herself as a southern belle instead of a woman deserted by her husband, a telephone man who "fell in love with long distances" but who probably found an incitement in his wife's pretensions. She is redeemed for humanity by her solicitude for her children, her laughable but touching effort to sell a magazine subscription over the telephone at dawn, and her admission that the unworldly Laura must get a husband if she is to escape the fate of the "little birdlike women without any nest" Amanda has known in the South. And Laura, too shy even to take a course in typewriting after the first lesson, acquits herself with sweet dignity and becoming stoicism when let down by her first and only gentleman caller; she is an unforgettable bit of Marie Laurencin painting. At the same time, however, Williams knows that pity for the halt and

blind must not exclude a sense of reality, that Tom's going out into the world was a necessary and wholesome measure of self-preservation; it is one of humanity's inalienable traits and obligations to try to save itself as best it can. Although Tom will never forget Laura and the candles she blew out, he is now part of the larger world that must find a common salvation in action, "for nowadays the world is lit by lightning."

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, too, health and disease are at odds with each other, but here the dialectical situation flares up into relentless conflict. The lines are sharply drawn in this more naturalistic drama, whose story, unlike that of *The Glass Menagerie*, is no longer revealed impressionistically through the merciful mist of memory. Nothing is circuitous in *A Streetcar*, and the dramatic action drives directly to its fateful conclusion as plebeian and patrician confront each other. Like other southern heroines of Williams, who invariably suggest Picasso's dehydrated "Demoiselles d'Avignon," Blanche Du Bois is not only a recognizable human being but an abstraction—the abstraction of decadent aristocracy as the painter's inner eye sees it. It is her final tragedy that the life she encounters in a married sister's home cannot spare her precisely when she requires the most commiseration. Her plantation lost, the teaching profession closed to her, her reputation gone, her nerves stretched to the snapping-point, Blanche has come to Stella in the French Quarter to find her married to a lusty ex-sergeant of Polish extraction. She is delivered into his untender hands when he discovers her lurid past and, although he may be momentarily touched by her fate on learning of the unhappy marriage that drove her to moral turpitude, his standards do not call for charity. With her superior airs and queasiness she has inter-

fered with Stanley's married happiness, and she must go. Loyal to his friend, who served in the same military outfit with him, he must forewarn Mitch, who is about to propose to her, that the southern lady has been a harlot, thus destroying her last hope. Having sensed a challenge to his robust manhood from the moment he met Blanche, he must even violate her. It is his terrible health, which is of earth and will defend itself at any cost, that destroys Blanche, and sister Stella herself must send the hapless woman to a state institution if she is to protect her marriage and preserve her faith in Stanley.

As in *The Glass Menagerie* and in the one-acters, the private drama is pyramided on a social base. Blanche is the last descendant to cling to the family plantation of Belle Reve, sold acre by acre by improvident male relatives "for their epic fornications, to put it plainly," as she says. Her simple-hearted sister declassed herself easily by an earthy marriage to Stanley Kowalski and saved herself. Blanche tried to stand firm on quicksand and was declassed right into a house of ill-fame. The substructure of the story has some resemblance to *The Cherry Orchard*, whose aristocrats were also unable to adjust to reality and were crushed by it. Nevertheless, Williams subordinated his oblation to reality, his realization that Stanley and the denizens of the New Orleans slum street called Elysian Fields represent health and survival, to a poet's pity for Blanche. For him she is not only an individual whose case must be treated individually but a symbol of the many shorn lambs for whom no wind is ever tempered except by the godhead in men's hearts and the understanding of artists like Williams himself. It is surely for this reason that the author called his play a "tragedy of incomprehension" and "en-

tered," in the words of his quotation from Hart Crane, "the broken world to trace the visionary company of love, its voice an instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)." It is in the light of this compassion that the pulse of the play becomes a succession of musical notes and the naturalism of the writing flares into memorable lines, as when Blanche, finding herself loved by Mitch, sobs out, "Sometimes there's God so quickly."

As his plays multiply, it will be possible to measure him against dramatists whom his writing so often recalls—against Chekhov, Gorki, O'Neill, and Lorca. That such comparisons can be even remotely envisioned for an American playwright under thirty-five is in itself an indication of the magic of his pen; and it will soon be seen whether this magic works in *Summer and Smoke*, another, but more complicated, southern drama which carries a woman's soul to Tartarus. The test may prove a severe one, since the new play is episodic enough to be considered a chronicle. Further testing will also gauge the range of his faculties. Williams has himself detected a limitation in the sameness of theme and background in his work. He is turning toward new horizons with two uncompleted plays; one of them is set in Mexico, the other in Renaissance Italy. In time we shall also discover whether he overcomes noticeable inclinations toward a preciosity that could have vitiated *The Glass Menagerie* and toward a melodramatic sensationalism which appears in the rape scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and in the addition of wedlock with a homosexual to Blanche's tribulations. All that is beyond question at the present time is that Tennessee Williams is already a considerable artist in a medium in which there are many craftsmen but few artists.

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A Public for Poetry?

RICHARD R. WERRY¹

I

ALMOST seventy years have elapsed since Matthew Arnold made his famed prediction that "the future of poetry is immense" because with poetry's emotion attached to idea, idea becomes a fact indissoluble in time's acids. Science, proceeding from unpoetic fact to unpoetic fact, cannot interpret life for modern men any more sustainingly than did the philosophy of medieval scholiasts interpret it for the medieval masses. The day will come when men "shall prize the breath and finer spirit of knowledge offered" by poetry.

Arnold's "Study of Poetry"² is primarily a recipe for evaluating the "classic qualities" of poetry. It is no defense of poetry itself; to Arnold poetry needed no defense because he thought it fulfilled a supreme need of the cultured intellect. "We are often told," he concluded, "that an era is opening in which we are to see multitudes of a common sort of readers, and masses of a common sort of literature; that such readers do not want and could not relish anything better than such literature, and that to provide it is becoming a vast and profitable industry. Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be abundantly worth while to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of monetary appearances; it never will lose supremacy. Currency and suprem-

acy are insured to it, not indeed by the world's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far deeper—by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity."

No one—I say it with confidence—but will agree that the era which was opening as Arnold was writing is now in the very bloom of its growth. The incredible sales records of best sellers are only less astounding than the endless procession of these meteoric masterpieces. Providing a common sort of reader with a common sort of literature has in fact become an industry vaster and far more profitable than Arnold, in his glummiest moment, ever imagined possible. Often the author's income from one "best seller" is enough not only to make him independent for life but, if he is reasonably provident, to make his children's children independent too. Good literature, though it may not have lost currency, certainly has lost supremacy to a great degree, while good poetry appears to have lost both supremacy and currency—so that the publication of contemporary poetry, except in textbook format, has become pretty largely a publishers' philanthropy. It is time, I think, to re-examine Arnold's premises; for, in the light of history, he appears to have erred.

II

Let me begin by clarifying my intentions. I am not so foolhardy as to presume myself competent to define good literature generally. Much less would I dare attempt to sort the true poets of our day from those whom history will consider the contrivers, the pretenders to a

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² Published in 1880 as the General Introduction to T. H. Ward's *English Poets*.

seat on Parnassus. Beginning with the assumption, which is borne out by publishers' sales statistics, that the "cultured" portion of the current reading public rarely purchases the works of contemporary poets, I am led to conclude either that Arnold was wrong in thinking that poetry with its "finer spirit of knowledge" can interpret life in a way that science cannot or else that we have among us no true poets. If poetry has nothing to say to the common sort of educated reader of a sustaining spiritual nature, then any consideration of the greatness of our poets becomes an exercise in the demonstration of personal tastes and, for the purposes of this article, useless. But, since I think that poetry can ennoble life, I shall begin with an analysis of the nutriment which poetry more than any other form of good literature offers a generally cultured reading public and then shall inquire briefly into the question of why it is not today offering that nutriment.

First of all, I must confess to being something of a traditionalist. I am willing to believe with Lincoln that you cannot fool all the people all the time. Actually, for milleniums, educated reading publics have held in highest esteem contemporary poets. They have not always agreed as to certain poets' merits; but, whenever they have conceded that a man was legitimately a poet, they have been unstinting in their admiration. Pope's renown among educated readers outshone Fielding's. Byron's was greater than Mrs. Radcliffe's. Tennyson and Browning were honored more than George Eliot or Thackeray. Today, although it may be true that T. S. Eliot's enthusiasts hold him in higher regard than Maugham or Forster, how many people who have read *Of Human Bondage* and *A Passage to India* have also

read *The Wasteland*—or, for that matter, have ever heard of it? In the past, poetry has always been conceived by a great majority of the trained reading public as the noblest form of literary expression. It is not so conceived by the majority of trained readers in our time.

Certainly, the cultured publics of the past, though they were more thoroughly schooled in the reading of poetry than the "liberally educated" public of today, were not so elite in their taste that they were capable of a different *kind* of reading than are people of our century. They had more leisure to give to reading—yes; the automobile, the motion picture, the radio, did not compete with literature for the privilege of entertaining people. But entertainment is not difficult to devise whenever two or more people come together. And I cannot bring myself to conclude that the popularity of living poets in past times was due to the desperation of the reading public. I think of the careers of poets—Chaucer, Jonson, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson—and I am struck with one fact: all these men were deeply concerned with the problems of their day, concerned to the extent that they expressed their feelings more with the intent of exerting an influence to an end than with that simply of relieving themselves. Slimly veiled satires, or urgent sonnet pleas, or highly rhetorical odes, or expository elegies, were addressed to a contemporary public, whatever the classic trappings of form and expression might have been. One of the problems in teaching Chaucer, Milton, or Shelley is how to make clear to twentieth-century readers the fourteenth-seventeenth- or nineteenth-century references which abound in *The Canterbury Tales*, *Lycidas*, or *The Revolt of Islam*.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not

declaring that contemporary appeal accounts for poets' greatness. I do not wish to reopen the old battle between Ancients and Moderns. I do not deny, either, Wordsworth's fundamental criterion for all lasting literature—that it appeal to men as men, not to men as bankers, or lawyers, or teachers, or laborers, or dwellers in any decade or era. I am only insisting upon the route which great poets seem always to have taken to achieve universality of appeal, that is, through the interests of their own time. When Milton attacked the Church of England, he attacked too the hearts of men. Had he not wished to attack the Church of England, however, he might not have succeeded in making *Lycidas* the great poem which it is. The poet's supreme accomplishment, it seems to me, lies in his capacity to lift men not *above* but *through* their own times to a universal realization of themselves as men, to a realization that emotionally others are fundamentally like themselves. Novel, drama, short story—any literary form must accomplish this miracle of spiritual expansion in some degree if it is to endure. But the great poem does it more directly, more completely, more inexplicably than any other form. And it does it, if it is to be read while the poet is yet alive, *in the language and experience of that time*.

A second need of the intelligently subjective reading public which, in the past at least, poetry has always seemed to fulfil is the need for articulateness, which is to say, the need people have for seeing carved in the marble of great language feelings and ideas which they themselves instinctively realize are true but which they have never been able to indite. This may be a secondary function of poetry; yet it is a legitimate one.

Memorable language is not to be interpreted, however, as epigrammatic language only. "Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn/ Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth" are lines just as memorable in their context as the lines "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan/ The proper study of mankind is man" are memorable on any page. A single image may give immortality to a line: "I must die/ Like a sick eagle looking at the sky." In great poetry there are always to be found many examples of memorable lines, lines which we, as men, read and instantly recognize as expressive of a thought or feeling which we ourselves in greater or less degree, directly or vicariously, have experienced.

A third need which poetry fulfils for men is what I choose to describe as the need for the "renovation of reality." This, I am aware, is a pretentious phrase, but it is nonetheless expressive of what I mean to say. Regardless of how sophisticated dilettantes may become, poets, I think, are great because they never utterly lose the perspectives of childish vision. Birds to them are not birds—but robins, wrens, and crows; trees never really come to be trees but remain maples, elms, and oaks. Poets tend to see differences rather than similarities. But this youthful capacity for true observation is not by itself enough to make a poet. The poet must see with language as well as with eyes, must feel with phrases, must be constantly endeavoring to satisfy his own realizations by translating them into words which, in the reading, will almost re-create the sensations of experiencing. Thus the poet must be able to contradict his nature with his intellect by seeking out analogies. If a man can satisfy his own demands in this quest, he is to himself a poet; but not unless he can

satisfy the needs of others by refurbishing *their* experiences and sensations can he be said to be, to the public, a poet. Obviously, if he writes only of those moments which all of us as individuals have but which none other can share, his expression of the moment may be perfectly poetic, yet the expression will have power of poetry to none but himself. Reading a great poem must be like returning to a room after a long absence, when the rug seems to have regained the color we knew it had when we bought it, when the dimensions of the walls and ceilings seem distinct again, when the harmony of decoration once again is apparent. A good poem renovates reality, which for most of us has a tendency to bronze with time.

These three needs that I have suggested true poetry can satisfy for men; which, I would say, poetry in the past has satisfied for its proper contemporary public—the need for relating one's own time emotionally with the course of human destiny, the need for articulateness, the need for the renovation of reality—are not felt individually. They are merely the parts which I conceive to make up much of the whole sustenance which true poetry offers its readers. How well do our contemporary poets supply this kind of sustenance to that part of today's reading public which is willing to read poetry?

III

The answer, obviously, is: Not very well.

Hungry men will eat whatever food they stumble upon; thirsty men are likely to drink even contaminated water. If intelligent subjective readers do indeed feel the need to adjust themselves and their times emotionally with other men

in other times, to become vicariously articulate, to feel reality renovated—and I am sure that they do feel these needs though they do not analyze them—they would not hesitate to read poetry which satisfied their needs any more than starving men would hesitate to fall upon the carcass of a hyena. But the fact is that few contemporary poets possess more than a clique of readers. And I suggest, at least as a partial explanation of this fact, that, although as a rule contemporary poems fulfil at least one of the three needs I have outlined, few fulfil all three consistently. And poetic communication for most readers results from that fusion of language qualities which will satisfy their craving to have these three needs jointly satisfied. Most of the poems of our time, I think, fail to achieve this fusion.

The Wasteland, for example, with its sterilized imagery and contrapuntal sound effects, is a poem with direct pertinence to the spiritual temper of our times. It speaks in the language (indeed, in the language!) of the contemporary reader, but *not in his experience*. Aware that he was reaching beyond the generally educated reader's experience for his symbolism, Eliot attached notes to his poem almost as lengthy as the poem itself and felt obliged to refer the reader to two scholarly studies in anthropology for further "elucidation." Abundant passages in the poem are in themselves poetically moving. But the poem, as a unit, fails to communicate poetically for any but the scholar-reader, him who can afford to devote several months to the elucidation of the lines word by word; and without such scholarly study the poem cannot achieve that fusion of content, expression, sound, which will advance the reader beyond mere sensation

and occasional idea well stated to coherent emotional experience. Eliot's poetry in general has been accused of disjointed logic, of being based on purely personal allusion, of prosaic diction; but the ease with which young students, properly prompted, respond to many of his shorter poems invalidates these charges. The real obstacle in the way of Eliot's appealing to a broader audience in *The Wasteland*, and others of his long poems, is his insistence upon deriving his imagery and his effects from sources beyond the intellectual experience of most readers, however intelligent. So, despite its declared importance among compilers of literary history—an importance based primarily upon the poem's influence upon other poets—*The Wasteland* is not read voluntarily by many of the poetry-reading public.

Memorable language is one of the startling qualities of any poem by Dylan Thomas. He possesses in higher degree than any other poet since Keats that instinct for phrasing which flashes truth as brilliantly and as suddenly as a spark snaps into being from struck flint. In his briefer poems, in which the labyrinth of his imagery does not become so tortuous as to enmaze hopelessly the reader's perceptions, he achieves both memorable language and that communion of experience between poet and reader which I have described as resulting in the renovation of reality. Such poems as "Twenty-Four Years," "The Force That Through the Green Fuse," "The Bread I Break," "A Refusal to Mourn the Death by Fire of a Child in London," are lyrics which will, I think, endure besides Keats's own. But they are not read widely today, for most of Thomas' other poems, although the individual lines coruscate with unforgettable phrases, lack

any experience of reality renovated because when he has finished his reading, the reader finds himself plunged into a mire of images, all undoubtedly meaningful in the complex of Thomas' own mind, but so contradictory, so abundant, so remote from general experience that the total experience of the poetry is depressing rather than elevating.

Eliot and Thomas I have chosen as illustrations of the failure of contemporary poets consistently to fulfil the needs I have set forth as poetically "sustaining" to mankind because they are perhaps the two poets most influential upon other poets of our day—one among the older contemporaries, the other among the younger. I do not condemn their works at large; I am convinced that some of their poems will appear in that anthology of the language's great poetry which will certainly be published in 2050. I say only that most of what they write demands a devotion to scholarship or to intellectual conceit-puzzling which the majority of contemporary readers, however intelligent, have not the time to offer, which I seriously doubt that readers in any century would have been willing to offer. People generalize from the bulk of a poet's writings in his own time. They are unwilling to ponder through twenty poems to find one which in a measure satisfies them. Thus, anthologies are the only volumes which have much chance for financial success today, but they, being edited as a rule by scholars or poets, cannot be relied upon to make the wisest selection for the needs of the public at large.

There are, I am well aware, other factors that in part account for the decline of the public for poetry—among them our educational program less humane than that of the "cultured" publics of

past centuries and the development of the prose stage and the movies at the expense of the poetic stage, so that audiences rarely hear poetry outside of high-school or college classrooms, where it is not likely to be heard to best advantage. Withal, the fact remains that there is no generally "cultured" public for poetry, no public which publishers can expect to react in such a unity as will make the publication of most poets' works a profitable venture. Except in the case of a few poets who succeed in fulfilling all three needs I have discussed—Frost; Sandburg; more lately, perhaps, Karl Shapiro—the potential public has been riven into clique adherences.

IV

Now, fully conscious of my heresy to the cause of art for the artist's sake, I dare to suggest that the cause of poetry's provincial plight today is not so much the fact of a common sort of reader as the fact of an uncommon sort of poet. Among critics as well as among artists, it has become fashionable to spurn the taste of the multitude, even of the "intellectual" multitude, so that a splendid approval from the cultured public at large, though it may make the artist's fortune, is likely to explode his reputation among fellow-artists. Especially does this inverted psychology apply to poets. It appears to be the accepted attitude of most contemporary poets that the public should be ignored, that poetry should be written for the poet himself, or at best for a few other poets of similar creed, that the poet should live his life in a fine disdain, unmolested, undetected even, except perhaps by a small cult of hyper-sensitive little-magazine readers who, by loudly crowing their idol's name at the doorsteps of less discerning but equally eager

friends, may eventually bring the poet to the attention of the professional poetry-nibblers, that is, critics, teachers of English literature, and chronic art liberals. Thus the poet may achieve a certain distinction of name, and several of his most communicative—but, he will be the first to assure you, less representative—pieces may find their way into a five-hundred-page anthology bearing some such rewarding title as *A Little Arsenal of Modern Poetry*, which will be complete with biographic sketches, casual pictures of the poets, and an introduction bound solidly to the firmament by a chain of pretentious jargon, a volume, in other words, admirably adapted for use in university classrooms. The teacher of this volume, if he is a man of experience, will begin the course with a humble admission that he himself does not pretend to understand *all* the remote references or involved images in the various poems (thereby succinctly implying that he understands practically all but does not expect his students to) and the anthologized poets, considered seriatim three a day, may be judged to have arrived at the pinnacle of their careers.

This, I think, has, in general, been the course to fame of most contemporary "name" poets—Eliot, Pound, Cummings, Auden, Lewis, most recently of Robert Penn Warren and Dylan Thomas. Now, it is by no means my intention to deny the validity of the poetry of such men as these. Cheese can be made extra sweet or extra sour, purely insipid or stinkingly pungent. It is still cheese, but—and this is my thesis—it is not palatable to the general cheese-eating public but only to a very small part of it which has the leisure to cultivate a taste for the special corruption which marks the special brand. The mass of the cheese-eating

public will seek a more generally concocted kind of cheese, one which will give them sustenance as well as taste, which will invite a second, possibly a third, helping but will not require them to abandon meat, or potatoes, or bread while they cultivate a taste for it.

The analogy, I admit, is farfetched, but I insist that it is not inapplicable. Poetry must be sustaining as well as sensuous; and for it to be so, its readers must feel its weight in their spiritual stomachs. It must not dissolve utterly on the tongue. It must leave a memory behind so that one knows he has eaten after he has left the table and is refreshed in the realization of having eaten.

I say that there is today, because of the democratic spread of education, potentially a broader poetry-reading public than has ever before existed in history. But it demands from poets the same sustenance that the publics of Milton, of Pope, of Byron, of Browning, demanded. That poets can reach this audience has been demonstrated by the successes—limited, perhaps, by comparison with the successes of novelists and biographers but tremendous when compared with the successes of the “personal” poets or the “clique” poets—of Rudyard Kipling; A. E. Housman; more lately, of Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost. I have heard the charges against these poets—that they are sentimental, obvious, old-fashioned, unnew, chauvinistic—in short, that they appeal directly through the emotions to the unspecialized intellect of the poetry-reading public. It may well be true that these men are not great poets; but if this is true, it is not because they have written poetry which is comprehensible in terms of the reader’s self and the past, memorable in phrasing, refreshing to the reader’s own perception. If it

is true, it is because great poets are very rare incidents in nature.

It will be said that I am arguing from logic rather than from experience, that the potential poetry-reading public I describe, if it existed and found the substance of contemporary poets insufficient, would make itself known to publishers by demanding frequent reprints of the great poets of the past. Such reprints do occur, and more frequently, I think, than most of us realize; but even so, the objection can be confuted on other grounds, for it is based on the same fallacious assumption that so many of our colleges make, namely, that the historical approach to reading a literary form is the natural one. I say it is not. If evolution had not made clear certain previously inexplicable facts of human anatomy and psychology, themselves a basis for prediction, it would not have roused thinking men and certainly would not have influenced thinking men’s habits of thought. For all thought, all experience, must stem from the present, whether it be pointed backward to the past or forward to the future. The current reading public cannot be blamed if it derives a mistaken generalization about dead poets from the evidence of the examples of contemporary poets; nor, again, if it overlooks in its general confusion such poets as are—not so evidently as Frost and Sandburg but yet pertinently—understandable, for example, Spender and MacLeish. Serious poetry, like serious prose, must have an apparent application to the present if it is to command a public. Did most of our contemporary novelists devote themselves to writing *Finnegans Wake*, the novel would become as obsolescent a publishers’ resource as poetry is, for we all think of the present before we think of the past, and progress

toward intellectual understanding must have a starting-point in the present.

But there are more Maughams, more Hiltons, more Forsters, more Hemingways, than there are Joyces. And, though these may well be less consummate artists than Joyce was, they remain far better novelists than he was in his latest

work. I wish to suggest that if we had more Frosts, more Sandburgs—yes, and more Kiplings—who would not be afraid even of telling a story in poetry, though we would probably have fewer exquisite artists than we now have, we would have better poets and, certainly, a greater public for poetry.

Time in the Modern Novel

DAYTON KOHLER¹

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, writing almost a century ago, brought the realistic novel to a point nearer perfection than it has reached since in handling character, action, and scene. James Joyce, who began his career in the impressionist tradition deriving from Flaubert, came close to destroying the classic structure of the novel and in the doing created new tensions in the use of language as communication. Between *Madame Bovary* and *Finnegans Wake* a span of eighty-two years throws into historical perspective the disintegration of the novel form.

It is not the purpose to trace in detail this process of disintegration. For better or worse, Flaubert did the whole imaginative job in fiction without appearing once before the reader in the combined role of property man and chorus. While Henry James and Joseph Conrad were laboring to deepen the dramatic values of what Joseph Warren Beach calls "the well-made novel," they were at the same time creating the modern novel of sensibility in all its preoccupation with form. The idea of the novel as "a direct impression of life"—the phrase comes from

Henry James—implies a filtering of experience through an individual sensibility. James used the strategy of the point of view to turn pictorial scene into drama by reflecting the action through one of the characters in his story. It was the same with Conrad's introspective narrator, Marlow. The result of these examples has been to shift the emphasis of fiction from some ideal truth or moral judgment which reader and writer looked at through the same spectacles to a presentation of the thing which seems true in terms of private experience or personality. This is writing in the modern tradition, which makes form dependent upon sensibility; a tradition loosely held together by writers as different as James, Proust, Conrad, Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.

The novel has been assaulted also from without, for it has felt the impact of every intellectual development of the last hundred years. After Newton, Bergson, and Einstein it could no longer evade the scientific necessity of a new concept of time and space; after Darwin, the biological necessity; after Marx, the economic necessity; after Freud, the psychological necessity of man's own thwarting

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and distorted personality. As a result, the novel has been put to political and social uses having only incidental connection with its form as a rigorous, self-bounded, self-contained art. Lacking a body of traditional belief, in an age of anxiety and doubt, the novelist has been thrown back upon his own resources as a man.

Literary history shows that, when the novelist has few doubts about his vision of life, he pays little attention to matters of form and style. But, when the writer can no longer take for granted the realities and community beliefs of an earlier society, he grows more concerned with elaboration of technique and the discipline of style. The older novelists, from Defoe to Thomas Hardy, knew that they had done their work when they began at the beginning, carried their people through a sequence of events leading up to a climax, and brought the novel to a satisfying conclusion. The whole subject was contained within a narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end. But no such ready mold exists for the modern novelist. He must find his own method to make the novel a measure of his awareness in a troubled and uncertain world.

Virginia Woolf has put the matter in this way:

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from the old; the moment of importance came not here but there. . . . Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

For the modern novelist life is no longer "a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged." It is the spectacle of man in his universe and the falling atoms of impression and sensation that shower about him in his time and place. In this view of life the realities of human experience no longer arrange themselves as a sequence of events unfolding in calendar time but as an interrelation of all events, past or present, that shape the patterns of our lives.

This, after all, is the modern subject: the nature of man and the growth of human consciousness. And consciousness is man's measurement for the nature and duration of time, as memory and history are its deposit. The modern novelist is alert to that time sense which runs through all awareness of the relations between fact and meaning, objects and ideas, outward appearance and inner reality; and he tries to make the form of the novel correspond, at least in its technical aspects, to his perception of reality.

The older novelist made a virtue of necessity in his treatment of time. It is true that Sterne tried to change the hands of his clock and by digressions into the essay all but lost the time sense for his reader, but he was a lonely pioneer. The modern writer has followed the course of science in the discovery of new methods for ordering the element of time. It was Bergson who first pointed the direction away from the calendar sense in fiction, with his theory of the fluid nature of reality and his emphasis upon intuition rather than upon reason as a means of sensing its duration. The direct influence of Bergson upon writers like Proust and Virginia Woolf is still debatable, but the fact remains that the modern writer has claimed for fiction the doctrine that reality is a never static process of creation which reason can apprehend only

through arbitrary concepts that stand for but do not actually represent experience, that every present moment incloses the past and anticipates the future, and that memory charts the course of personality in the continuous stream of time. The Bergsonian view makes time a relative matter, and here is suggested all the modern consciousness of retrospect and anticipation in the delicate balance between knowledge of happiness past and hope of happiness to come. It gives the writer his inescapable vision of man in the flux of time and the stream carrying him away; arouses his need to find some vital link, some emerging pattern, in impressions and incidents that are always in the process of becoming; and directs his search for permanence in the midst of change.

The novelist's concern with time is a natural outgrowth of the modern subject, a conscious awareness of the separateness and togetherness of events that give density and meaning to the pattern of experience. It is safe to say that the most interesting developments in the technique of the modern novel are those relating to the problem of time. These treatments differ in quality and kind, however; and, because their variety alone offers a wide field for critical consideration, they may be listed under different headings.

TIME AS HISTORY

The tense of fiction is the past. In this respect, at least, the novel is analogous to the nonfiction forms from which it stemmed. Like history and biography the novel attempts to present upon an imaginative level a record of events that have happened. It must at all times appear real, and the past compels a reality of belief peculiarly its own. More than this, the very pastness of the past has always

appealed to the human imagination because it incloses in its perspectives of time the mysteries of the beginnings of things and life and death. From another point of view the past is a necessary condition of a story told rather than acted in all the directness and immediacy of present time upon the stage. It was only natural, therefore, that the early novelist should accept limitations of his form and make a narrator an established convention for getting his story told.

In this sense, of course, all novels are novels of the past. On the most primitive level of story-telling there is the historical novel, which, consciously or unconsciously, began by celebrating the values of a vanished time and place.

Sigrid Undset creates against the background of the past a world of solid reality, so that her historical novels make the remote medieval age as real as the present. Her men and women live in a violent and picturesque time, yet she keeps them true to the experiences of life which have been true of mankind in all ages. Time passes over Kristin Lavransdatter and Olav Audunsson; they grow up, fall in or out of love, and marry. They are forced into circumstances they had not foreseen. Kristin's disobedience must be expiated; Olav's past haunts him as years come and go. They grow old; they die. Time passes and men change. The effects of these medieval novels are precisely those that Arnold Bennett achieved in the more recent, provincial society of *The Old Wives' Tale*.

Bennett's novel stands almost at mid-point between the traditional novel and the new. Time is as much the theme of *The Old Wives' Tale* as it is of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Everything contributes to the sense of its passing. It condemns Constance to meek endurance of provincial routine and tedium. It car-

ries Sophia to Paris and a precarious existence there, as well as to the accumulation of a modest fortune. In the end she goes back to the town of her birth, where the sisters end their days together. No novel is more saturated with detail to show the changes brought about by the passing of time. One by one the older characters die; styles change; history breaks in with the Franco-Prussian War; horsecars give way to electric trams and automobiles. In addition, the author stands by to point out significant changes in the lives of his characters. The novel narrowly misses greatness. Bennett shows us all the effects and ravages of time, but—and this is precisely the point of much criticism of the Georgian novel—we see them only from the outside in a novel of externals. The writer deals with time in only one dimension, upon the level of action and scene, and we are never aware of what is happening to his people from within. Even Sophia's reflections as she looks at her dead husband seem little more than a convenient mood of fatalism to make time's tragedy complete.

The internal weakness of *The Old Wives' Tale* poses this question: How can the modern novelist take advantage of new technical freedoms in the treatment of time without weakening the traditional form of the novel? Generally speaking, there are three means open to him. One of these has already been indicated: the use of a limited point of view to provide in the novel approximately the same effect found in the dramatic present of the stage. James learned Flaubert's lesson of impersonality, but he also created the restricted point of view to convey the "discriminated occasion" with "a minimum of architecture." His contribution to the technique of fiction was a method for revealing human experience without summary narrative or explanation of cir-

cumstances leading up to his dramatic scenes. He provides, instead, a spectator who is on the scene from the beginning and through whose eyes we first become aware of the clash of personality and complication of action. Story still comes to us at second hand, in the past, but we see and hear through the eyes and ears of one of the actors on the stage. Once he accepts the point of view, the reader is directly involved in the scene as it develops.

Another method is that by which the writer stretches an interval of time across a number of lives, holding the measure of the moment like a note of music to show simultaneous action on different levels. This is the method that Conrad implied in his phrase about "stopping in the very fullness of the tick"; it gives to fiction a complication of space as well as a complication of time.

For an example of this aesthetic of the novel we go back to Flaubert, to that magnificent scene at the fair and the background of stir and bustle during Rudolphe's protestations of undying love to Emma Bovary. In the street below, the jostling crowd mixes with the livestock on exhibit; on the judges' platform pompous officials mouth their speeches to the noisy spectators, while, at the window above, the lovers carry on the trite dialogue of their sentimental romance. "Everything should sound simultaneously," Flaubert wrote, describing this scene; "one should hear the bellowing of the cattle, the whisperings of the lovers and the rhetoric of the officials all at the same time."

Flaubert's statement describes the method Joyce used successfully in *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf almost mastered in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the middle of Joyce's novel there is a scene in which scores of people are shown, each occupied with his own particular affairs during

an afternoon in Dublin—shopkeepers, priests, lovers, lawyers, undertakers, policemen. Each appears in a series of fleeting glimpses, and among them Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom go casually, not as centers of reference for the narrative but as part of this amazing cross-section of Dublin life. It is a picture of the variety and complexity of human interests and occupations going on simultaneously during a given interval of time. In the same manner Mrs. Woolf brings together in her novel a group of people whose lives may never touch in a physical sense but whose comings and goings affect one another suddenly, profoundly, even mortally, during Clarissa Dalloway's day. The novel, like *Ulysses*, is narrowly circumscribed by time, for the whole of the action takes place within a single day. It opens with Mrs. Dalloway's morning preparation for a party, and it ends with an account of the party that same evening. Within this space of time, by the seemingly casual contacts she makes and the associations and memories they evoke, the whole of Mrs. Dalloway's life is laid bare.

If time can be stretched out in this fashion to show the variety of human experience, it can also be pushed downward to reveal the depth and intensity of that experience. Modern man cannot escape the *sense of the past* that rises, layer after layer, toward the present. A boy looks for arrowheads in a cornfield always with an awareness of the land before the settlers came and their plows broke the soil, of the time of hunters in the wilderness and the warrior trail. So it is with the novelist. Thousands of impressions are felt to be crowding in upon the present and pressing for recognition in the modern consciousness. It is characteristic of our age that T. S. Eliot should have filled *The Waste Land* with tags of quotation from earlier literature and images of

history. These float through the background of the poem, not casually, as in the accidental processes of time, but strategically placed to provide at every point in the poet's survey of the modern world an ironic contrast between a noble past and an ignoble present.

The success of Willa Cather with this treatment of historical time has never been properly evaluated. *My Ántonia* reaches back into history when Jim Burden tells the story of Coronado; the Nebraska wheat field in the sunset is flooded with a sense of the historic past in the legend of the old explorer and his search for the Seven Golden Cities. In *The Professor's House* there are various levels of time within the structure of the novel: the level of present action in the story of Godfrey St. Peter and his family; the time of memory in recollections of his boyhood and literary labors; the time of tradition and learning in his career as a teacher; and primitive time of the long-dead cliff dwellers in the lost city on the Blue Mesa. These levels of the past, merging quietly in the autumnal mood of the novel, surround character, anecdote, legend, and action within the long perspectives of time. *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is another novel of the past that breaks the surface of the narrative by excursions backward into the time of the conquistadors and the Franciscans and beyond them into the distant past of the desert tribes and the cliff dwellers. In her chronicle story of the two missionary priests in the desert country of the Southwest, Miss Cather has reclaimed a whole segment of the American past.

TIME AS METHOD

Henry James's point of view became Conrad's Marlow—"that preposterous master-mariner," as James called him. The narrator in Conrad's novels serves a double function. In the first place, he is

a spokesman for certain views of life which Conrad, as Flaubert's disciple, could not express in his own person. In the second, he fits into Conrad's idea that a story must always be accounted for. It seemed only natural to Conrad that he should put into Marlow's mouth stories similar to those he had himself heard, during his seafaring days, in the cabins of sailing ships and on club verandas in tropic ports. He brought into prose fiction the simple theory that stories told seldom follow a straightforward sequence of events. Such stories loop backward upon themselves or else jump forward into unanticipated sequence; they leave the narrator free to moralize or digress, and usually they create suspense by relating the how of a story whose ending the hearer already knows. Or one part of a story may be heard in one place and the other parts picked up in ports scattered halfway round the world. The sailor-narrator gathers up these details piecemeal and puts them together more or less as they came to him at different times.

The method sounds simple enough in summary, but at first reading Conrad's way of telling a story is the most bewildering aspect of his technique. *Lord Jim* is typical of the broken chronology of his method. The first part comes from Conrad himself through his encounters with the English water clerk in different Eastern ports. This section includes a brief sketch of Jim's early background, his cowardly desertion from the *Patna*, and a picture of Jim at the trial of the officers for abandoning their ship. The story then passes to Marlow, who retells the story of the trial from his point of view and recalls an earlier encounter of his own with the German captain of the ship. He returns to the story of the trial in order to *anticipate* the later suicide of

the judge presiding at the trial. He gives Jim's own account of what happened aboard the *Patna* but again breaks the story of Jim's confession and resolves for the future in order to tell the story of the French lieutenant who boarded the ship and towed it into port. Marlow reviews his dealings with Jim after the trial and *jumps ahead* to tell of his last sight of Jim on Patusan. He *goes back* to give an account of Jim's experiences as a water clerk and introduces the character of Stein. Then he returns to recollections of his visit to Patusan, *reviews all Jim had told* of his life there, and ends with Marlow's farewell to Jim. Later he *pieces together* from various sources the story of Jim's final heroism and death and passes them on, in a long letter, to one of the hearers of his tale.

TIME AS FANTASY

When we remember that almost from the beginning of literature the utopian story has looked toward the future and the ideal state of man, it seems strange that *anachronistic reversals* of time or its imaginative use in fantasy should have appeared at a comparatively late date in the development of the novel. Edward Bellamy prepared the way with his *Looking Backward* in 1888, and a year later Mark Twain realized the possibilities of anachronistic humor in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. These novels, however, had aims quite apart from the treatment of time as fantasy. Twain's Connecticut Yankee, for example, goes backward to the days of the Round Table, but he carries the modern consciousness with him. The novel is a work of boisterous humor and extravagant satire in its contrast of civilizations. The Yankee travels through time for the same reason that Swift sent his Gulliver voyaging through space.

H. G. Wells came closer to true fantasy in stories like *The Time Machine*. This novel had a scientific basis in the mathematical speculation of a space-time concept, and its pictures of the utopian world degenerated into classes of helpless aristocrats and cannibalistic workers and of a dying planet with only one living creature flapping by the seashore are still effective. But, as Paul Valéry has pointed out, Wells uses and explores time only in a concept measurable in terms of a *definite* past and a *predictable* future.

Today the time fantasy has been almost completely taken over by the comic magazines and consequently vulgarized for literary uses. There are only a few examples of fantasy in modern fiction that rise to the level of distinction. One of these is L. Sprague de Camp's *Lest Darkness Fall*, the story of a young archeologist who suddenly finds himself transported back into sixth-century Rome shortly before the final fall. There are both humor and agreeable sense in the way in which he heads off the barbarian invasion and then, by inventing the printing press, creates a new history in which Rome does not fall and the Dark Ages are averted. The novel would seem little more than an imitation of Mark Twain's anachronistic story if it were not for the theory upon which the book is based: "These people who disappear, they slip down the trunk of history; and from where they stop—if they are very lucky and intelligent—a new branch of history grows." *The Time Machine* is based upon the mathematics of space-time continuum; this novel, upon its metaphysics.

Orlando is the least regarded of Virginia Woolf's books, yet is it in some ways her most successful experiment in fiction. For purposes of fantasy it traces in straightforward biographical fashion the life of a hero who is sixteen years old

in Queen Elizabeth's time, changes his sex at the age of thirty under Charles II, and ends as a woman of thirty-six on the stroke of midnight on the eleventh of October, 1928. More than three centuries of English history go into the story of *Orlando*, in a series of situations realistically presented yet carrying with them the impression of symbolic meanings and of time flowing into the present and merging with it.

TIME AS MEMORY AND MYTH

From the dream-trance reverie which introduces the themes and characters of *Remembrance of Things Past* to that long last sentence, with its slow, sounding echoes of the word "Time," Marcel Proust's novel is art distilled out of the very processes of memory and of time itself. The structure of the novel is dictated entirely by the movement of memory, especially by the illusion of the way time passes, or seems to pass, recurs, or seems to recur. Proust has all the modern novelist's concern for time and space in his attempt to recapture out of the past the unconscious memory of people and events. These things can never be recalled by reason or intellectual memory; they may be evoked and re-created in their entirety only by sensation or impression. The title of the work in itself indicates Proust's twofold concerns: time lost and time regained. "This invisible substance of time," he said, "I have tried to isolate, but to do this the experience had to last."

It was necessary, therefore, that his novel cover a considerable period of time, to give opportunity for showing among a variety of personages the processes of time transforming events and ideas and man himself, tracing through unconscious memory the meaning or savor of an event, suspending temporal causality to

let the past reappear in the present consciousness in all the wholeness of its original image. It is plain that for Proust the reality of the past is *not* contained in the *reconstruction* of past scenes and events but in the physical sensations and moods they re-create. The origin of his discovery of lost time is the incident of the cake dipped into a cup of tea. The taste of this morsel brings back to him childhood memory of another cake dipped in tea that an aunt had given him years before at Combray, and with this recollection all the surrounding impressions of that time come back to him. "In that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water lilies on the Vivonne, and the good people of the village and their little dwellings and the church and all Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, came into being, both town and gardens, from my cup of tea."

In form, *Remembrance of Things Past* is a novel without plot or crisis, unfolding with every lavish detail that the writer can invoke between two records of sensation. The first is a childhood memory of the night M. Swann came to dinner and he was sent to bed without his mother's good-night kiss. Unhappy, he lies awake for hours until he hears the sound of the doorbell and knows that the guest has departed. Later his mother comforts him, reads him to sleep, and spends the night in his room. The incident seems trivial at the time. But years later, at the Princesse de Guermante's reception, he happens to pick up a copy of the book his mother had read to him on that remembered night, and suddenly across the years he hears again the ringing of the bell and knows that it will echo in his mind forever. The tragedy of time breaks in with the realization that everything weak and futile in his nature dates from that night in his childhood, and in that

moment he sees the ravages of time among the people he has known.

Remembrance of Things Past is not a novel in the traditional sense. It is symphonic in design, the poised sensibility of the narrator picking out the motifs of his experience, holding them for thematic effect, returning to them again in the process of recurrence as change becomes permanent in memory. The narrator moves through two circles of interest, "Swann's Way" and "The Guermantes' Way," at first in parallel sequence but later simultaneously. This overlapping pattern of experience builds up a series of complex relationships through the imagination and observations of the narrator whose perceptions we follow from childhood to disillusioned middle age.

Literary gossip has frequently coupled Proust's name with that of James Joyce. No two writers, however, are more unlike. Proust is introspective and descriptive; Joyce, dramatic and logical. Proust builds his novel out of a tremendous but private sensibility; Joyce gives *Ulysses* a kind of classic order by superimposing his characters and the crowded events of a single Dublin day upon a significant myth from the remote literary past. The structure of Joyce's novel, beneath confusion of incident and subjective probings, parallels the story of the *Odyssey*. There is more than a retelling of story in Joyce's method, for this parallel allows considerable freedom with time and space and gives opportunity for dramatic conflict of perspectives. The past jostles the present on every page as Joyce attempts, as Edmund Wilson has said, to "render as accurately as it is possible in words to do, what our participation in life is like—or rather what it seems to us like as from moment to moment we live."

Thomas Wolfe is the one American writer of sensibility concerned with the

nature and duration of time. He had all of Proust's passion for the exploration and re-creation of the past and out of memory he tried to "set down America as far as it can belong to the experience of one man." Time, legend, and myth are as much a part of his method as they are of Proust and Joyce, as his title, *Of Time and the River*, indicates. In *The Story of a Novel* he tells of his attempts to deal with three concepts of time in his work, Time Present and Time Past and behind them a larger measure that he called Time Immutable—the time of mountains, oceans, earth, and stars—which is beyond human consciousness.

TIME AS SYMBOL

Critics, discussing Virginia Woolf's novels, invariably resort to terms associated with music or, more appropriately, with poetry. For Mrs. Woolf looked at life with a poet's vision, and she went even beyond Joyce in her use of symbols to make objects in the external world correspond to an inner reality. Her lyric method had its beginning in her first experimental novel, *Jacob's Room*, but in that series of bright pictures which reveal the many sides of Jacob's personality she was still more interested in showing life as flux than she was in dramatizing her hero's inner states. Jacob's room is understandable enough, since there is nothing particularly complex in the idea that everything a man knows or experiences becomes a part of his place in time; and the creaking of the chair in the empty room after his death carries its own symbolic weight. There are other images just as relevant, however, whose function Mrs. Woolf points out with illustrative comment, and the result is very much like reading footnotes to a lyric poem.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* she has her material under firmer control. This novel projects

the experience of a lifetime within the span of a single day. Time appears on various levels as the different characters in turn recall the past or look toward the future, and often the only unifying element among these people is the moment of time which brings them together. Mrs. Woolf uses the striking of a clock to denote both the hours of an actual day and the shift from one figure to another and the consequent change in her system of time. In this novel, too, she experiments with a device considerably elaborated later in *The Waves*, the use of recurrent images to identify the consciousness of each of the characters. *To the Lighthouse* was the first of her novels to fuse the form of fiction and the symbolism of poetry. The lighthouse itself is the symbol of time which stands at the center of her novel, an image of what is permanent in human experience, the alternating light and shadow of its beam becoming in turn joy and sorrow, life and death. The structure of the novel follows the same pattern: the long flash of the beam corresponding to the first section, "The Window," in which members of the Ramsay family and their guests are set in motion; then an interval of darkness, "Time Passes," when the house stands empty to decay after Mrs. Ramsay's death; and, next, a second, shorter beam of light, "The Lighthouse," thrown upon the return of human consciousness to the empty cottage, where issues are decided and doubts and fears dissolved. The book is full of symbols—the twisted finger of a glove, the draped shawl, the fountain, and the spray. These are in turn subordinated to the scene of Lily Briscoe completing the picture she had begun years before, seeing in a quick flash of intuition as she puts the last brush stroke on her canvas the relationship of all these people to the dead Mrs. Ramsay and the meaning of her picture as a capture of life.

The helpful symbolism of *To the Lighthouse* becomes artificial and awkward in the structure of *The Waves*. In this novel Mrs. Woolf's values of time grow more and more relative as she tries to record the impressions of its passing upon six minds simultaneously. In a series of highly stylized monologues each of her characters traces the course of his own memory and sensation from childhood to old age.

Mrs. Woolf's last novel, *Between the Acts*, relies upon symbolism similar to that used so effectively in *To the Lighthouse*. In her handling of background there is always an awareness of the primitive or historical past, conveyed in images of the flint arrowhead, the Roman wall, the Elizabethan manor house, the hill still marked by the turning of the plow to grow wheat during the Napoleonic wars. England rather than time gives the novel its underlying theme, but Mrs. Woolf presents the land itself against the greater background of its history. And so the pageant which represents English history from the Middle Ages to the reign of Victoria fills the greater part of the novel with symbolic meaning. The trivial, selfish, stupid, idealistic people who watch the pageant do not matter, Mrs. Woolf implies. They are minor actors in an interlude between the acts; that is, between the periods of greater drama in national history. The airplane droning overhead is the threat of war and destruction to these people who after the pageant go back to their own affairs—Mrs. Swithin, wisely enough, to her perusal of the *Outline of History*.

CODA

Mrs. Woolf's novels represent an attempt to pierce "a semi-transparent en-

velope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end," and her example holds illustrative value for discussion of her contemporaries as well. The chief problem of the modern novelist is that of form. Rebell ing against the tyranny of time and its arbitrary sequence of day and night, Monday and Tuesday, birth and death, the writer tries, if he is sufficiently an artist, to create the illusion of time under control. Obviously he cannot order the processes of time itself; what he can control, within the limits of his art, is the sense of its passing and duration. To this end he has developed a whole battery of methods and devices. Joyce's bewildering system of cross-references, parodies, and parallels from history and mythology, Proust's recapture of lost time in such incidents as the dipping of the *madeleine* into a cup of tea and the ringing of the bell at a fashionable reception, Virginia Woolf's symbolism of wind and wave, of Big Ben striking the hours, of the artist's vision as she puts the last brush stroke on her canvas—these are among the means by which the modern writer has enlarged the technical resources and the scope of fiction. One result has been the progressive break-down of distinctions formerly existing between poetry and prose, in an effort to give to fiction the sudden flash of recognition or the naked moment of perception which in earlier periods was the function of great poetry alone. Another has been to create for imaginative prose a variety of patterns which have this one thing in common: the individual approaches to the technique of the novel and the end results have little relation to what we recognize as the traditional novel form.

To Write the Truth

RICHARD M. WEAVER¹

THE endless effort toward refurbishing college composition, with its restless shift of approach, of sequence, of emphasis, arouses suspicion that the most formidable question of all has been begged. A course so firmly entrenched in every curriculum and yet so productive of dissatisfaction must conceal a problem which needs to be set forth in its true nature and proportion.

For this reason I wish to make a certain radical, and probably impolitic, inquiry about objectives. Suppose it were possible to poll every teacher of college composition with reference to its aims; is it likely that any area of unanimous agreement could be found? I am aware of the varied philosophies, but if the question is properly phrased, my surmise is Yes; I cannot imagine anyone's denying that the aim of a course in composition is to make students more articulate. Every instructor wishes his students to write better, to talk better, and is chagrined if tests cast doubt upon the achievement. He may steal moments to introduce them to the sweetness and light of literature, but his success is measured by how his charges gain facility with their native tongue. That, at least, is the plain implication of syllabuses, course plans, and examinations. I suspect, however, that just here lies the root of our commonly felt frustration; we are not conceiving the real nature of our duty if we stop with making students articulate, even to the point of eloquence.

For at the source of our feeling of restlessness and incomplete achievement is the ignoring of a question necessarily prior: About what do we wish to make men articulate? Admittedly we who instruct in the art of speech are turning loose upon the world a power. Where do we expect the wielders of that power to learn the proper use of it? Now "proper" is, of course, a critical word, and I propose next to examine its possible meanings.

There came a moment in the fourteenth century when teachers of rhetoric and philosophy hesitated between two aims: Was it their duty to teach men *vere loqui* or *recte loqui*, in the phrases then employed? Obviously a basic question of epistemology was involved. Those who favored the former were metaphysicians; those who favored the latter had come to believe, as Bacon expressed it in the *Advancement of Learning*, that "the Essential Forms or true differences of things cannot by any human diligence be found out." Empiricism was gathering strength, and the decision was to teach *recte loqui*, as one can discover in the manuals of rhetoric of the Renaissance. Once the ontological referents were given up, however, this proved but an intermediate stage, and the course continued until to-day we can discern on all sides a third aim, which I shall take the liberty of phrasing in a parallel way as *utiliter loqui*. From speaking truthfully to speaking correctly to speaking usefully—is this

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not the rhetorician's easy descent to Avernus?

Yet these changes seem to be symptomatic of a profound trend, and it is to be feared that the course of our civilization is mirrored in the direction they indicate. The teacher of composition today, who thinks he is struggling merely with the ignorance and indifferentism of individuals, is actually trying to hold back the tide which is threatening intellectual life as such. Perhaps the picture seems melodramatic. I think it will seem less so after we have examined the implications of the trend.

Let us begin with our own time and look at *utiliter loqui*, which is usually described as a potent handmaiden of Success. It is the art of using language to better our position in the world—and heaven knows its objective comports with a great deal that has been said from high places about the aim of education. That knowledge is power has been dinned at us until it appears faintly treasonable to question the pragmatic use of speech. But, in all candor, is it the goal of our instruction in expression, both written and oral, to make men more eloquent about their passions and their interests? It would hardly do to reason from actual practice, for a large part of the teaching of composition facilitates and perhaps encourages such proficiency. From it comes the language of journalism and advertising; from it comes the language of those who study rhetoric with the object of making the worse appear the better cause. In technical and professional schools the aim may be frankly indicated in catalogue descriptions; language is a tool which will enable you to get what you want if you use it well—and well does not mean scrupulously. Says George F. Babbitt to his son Ted, who is having his evening struggle with

Comus and Cicero, "Be a good bit better if you took Business English, and learned how to write an ad, or a letter that would pull." Millions will agree on the point with Babbitt, and plenty have paid hard cash for training which they were told would enable them to place eloquence in the service of popularity or profit.

Those who teach English on this level are the modern sophists, as the homely realism of the world seems to recognize. They are doing what the orators were once accused of doing, making speech the harlot of the arts. More specifically, they are using the element of universality in language for purposes which actually set men against one another. They are teaching their students how to prevail with what is, finally, verbal deception.

Now *recte loqui*, because it teaches a sort of etiquette, appears more respectable; and therein lies its danger. It is the way of those who wish their speech to bear the stamp of conventional correctness. They have their eyes, therefore, upon tradition, or upon the practice of a dominant class, since they desire their style of utterance to indicate that they belong. They are more fearful of a misplaced accent than of an ambiguity, because the former arouses suspicion that they have not been with the right people. This is the language favored by the timid, who live in fear of conventions, and by the ambitious, who have learned how to use conventions as a means of self-promotion. Making allowance for those who see an ideal in purism, we can yet say that this is speech which is socially useful, and thus we are not in much better plight if we confine ourselves circumspectly to the teaching of *recte loqui*. The acceptance of such assignment still leaves the teacher indifferent to truth. He has no standard other than what was done, if he is a traditionalist, or what is

being done, if he is a pragmatist. A large body of opinion, of course, believes that this is precisely the teacher's job; he is paid to be an interpreter and an upholder of established institutions; he initiates the young into the mysteries but does not question them himself. Every teacher has to make this choice between play actor and prophet, and most of them choose the play actor. The public must suspect this hopelessly servile role when it snickers at caricatures of teachers.

Certainly nothing creative and nothing revolutionary (which in the best sense is creative) can come from this dancing of attendance upon fashion in speech. It means in the nature of things a limitation to surfaces; indeed, it leaves one without a real standard of what is right, for the most massive traditions undergo change, and the teacher may at any moment find himself faced with competing old and new ways and without a criterion to judge between them. In sum, *recte loqui* requires the language of social property. Because it reflects more than anything else a worldliness or satisfaction with existing institutions, it is the speech of pragmatic acquiescence. Whoso stops here confesses that education is only instruction in mores. Is it any wonder that professors have been contemptuously grouped with dancing masters, sleight-of-hand artists, and vendors of patent medicine?

If now we are not resigned to the teaching of sophistry or of etiquette, there remains only the severe and lofty discipline of *vere loqui*. This means teaching people to speak the truth, which can be done only by giving them the right names of things. We approach here a critical point in the argument, which will determine the possibility of defining what is correct in expression; we come in

fact to the relationship of sign and thing signified.

Since this involves the inherent rightness of names, let us consider for a moment the child's statement: "Pigs are called 'pigs' because they are filthy beasts." The semanticists offer this as an outstanding example of fatuity, but what, I would ask, are the alternatives? They are: "Pigs are called 'pigs' because that is what they have been called for a long time," and "Pigs are called 'pigs' because this name gives one a degree of control, as when summoning them to the trough." After all, there is something to be said for the child's interpretation. It presents an attachment of thing and concept. The others, in accepting tradition and in seeking utility, offer reasoning which is merely circular. The first says that what is, is; and the second affirms in good pragmatic vein that what works, works. I would not argue that the child has the whole philosophy of the matter; but he appears to be seeking the road to understanding; he is trying to get at the nature of the thing, and such must be the endeavor of all who seek a bridge to the real.

Now every teacher is for his students an Adam. They come to him trusting in his power to bestow the right names on things. "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." The naming of the beasts and the fowls was one of the most important steps in creation. Adam helped to order the universe when he dealt out these names, and let us not overlook what is implied in the assertion that the names stuck. There is the intimation of divine approval, which would frown upon capri-

cious change. A name is not just an accident; neither is it a convention which can be repealed by majority vote at the next meeting; once a thing has been given a name, it appears to have a certain autonomous right to that name, so that it could not be changed without imperiling the foundations of the world.

If I begin to seem fanciful here, let us recall that Plato was deeply interested in this problem, as one can discover by reading the *Cratylus*. And he could accept the view neither that a name is an accident nor that it is a convention which a man or a state may alter at will. For him—and we should wonder why teachers have not pondered this more—a name is “a means of *teaching* and of separating reality.” The word in the original is *didaskalikon*. Consequently, he goes on to add, a teacher is one who gives names well, and “well means like a teacher.” Because those who give the names are in a unique position to control, the task is not to be intrusted to just anyone. “Then it is not for everyman, Hermogenes,” he makes Socrates declare, “to give names, but for him who may be called the name-maker; and he, it appears, is the lawgiver, who is of all artisans among men the rarest.” Plato then proceeds to a conclusion that since the name-maker is the lawgiver, he must, if he is to make proper use of this *organon didaskalikon*, have a dialectician sitting by his side. By thus arranging a philosophical supervision for name-giving, he establishes his point that name-giving is not a task for “trifling and casual persons.” Certainly no one blind to the unities and pluralities of the world can be placed in charge of what things are to be called.

The task now begins to appear serious indeed, for those engaged in separating reality are in effect ordering the universe. The burden of some teachers is in fact

heavier than Adam's, for teaching the names of imponderables is far more difficult and dangerous than teaching those of animals and rocks. The world has to be named for the benefit of each oncoming generation, and who teaches more names than the arbiter of the use of language? With the primer one begins to call the roll of things, and the college essay is but an extended definition.

Suppose a teacher, striving to vitalize his instruction, as the professors of education like to put it, assigns his papers on current topics. What is he to tell students, by way of preparation or correction, that “democracy” is the name of? Does it stand for something existing in the nature of things, something in accordance with “right reason,” or can it be changed overnight to mean dictatorship of the proletariat? And what of “freedom”? Does it stand for an area in which the individual is sovereign, or does it signify some wide function of a centralized government? What sense of direction is carried by the term “progressive”? Consider the immeasurable harm one might do students by telling them that “history” is the name of our recollection of the past adjusted to suit our feelings and aspirations, as some recent historians would have us do.

I am not unaware of the questions which will come crowding in at this point. It will be asked: By what act of arrogance do we imagine that we know what things really are? The answer to this is: By what act of arrogance do we set ourselves up as teachers? There are two postulates basic to our profession: the first is that one man can know more than another, and the second is that such knowledge can be imparted. Whoever cannot accept both should retire from the profession and renounce the intention of teaching anyone anything.

Let those who consider such prerogative unreasonable consider what remains. If we cannot be sure that one person knows better than another the true nature of things, then we should follow the logic of our convictions and choose our teachers as the ancient Greek democracies chose their magistrates, by lot. Let us imagine that on some appointed November day we here in Chicago proceed to Soldiers Field, and there from a huge kettle we draw lots, and those drawing, say, the blue slips become automatically the school staff for the ensuing year. This mode of selection would surely be mandatory under the proposition that one man knows as much truth as another about the things that are to be passed on to the next generation. I do not think the scheme would meet with popular approval. In fact, I suspect that it would be denounced as radical. We should have to go back then and say that whoever is willing to make the most elementary predication acknowledges thereby that he thinks he has some grasp upon reality, which is a form of saying that he thinks he possesses some measure of the truth. Such people only may be certificated to teach. For those who doubt the existence of truth, there is only what Santayana has called "the unanswerable scepticism of silence."

There is no escape from this in the plea that, since there are today many competing ideologies, it is usurpation for the teacher to make his own the standard. Such policy throws us right into the embrace of relativism, which leaves us as helpless as the skepticism outlined above. It is very hard after a century of liberalism, with its necessity of avoiding commitment, to get people to admit the possibility of objective truth, but here again we are face to face with our dilemma: if it does not exist, there is nothing

to teach; if it does exist, how can we conceive of allowing anyone to teach anything else? Those who argue that teachers should confine themselves to presenting all sides of every question—in our instance, to giving all the names previously and currently applied to a thing—are tacitly assuming that there are sources closer to the truth than are the schools and that the schools merely act as their agents. It would be interesting to hear what these sources are.

Here is the point at which teachers have to make up their minds as to whether they are the "trifling and casual" persons described by Plato. Either they are going to teach sophistry and etiquette, or they are going to teach names which are indexes to essences. I will grant that the latter course makes teachers of composition philosophers more truly than those who teach the systems of philosophy, but there is no alternative short of that disastrous abdication which says, "Write anything you please as long as you write it well." This is invocation to the asocial muse. Just anything the uninstructed mind pleases cannot be written well. Even on the most practical level there is no such separation between substance and form of utterance. Anyone who has observed the teaching of composition knows that, regardless of how much latitude of sentiment the instructor gives himself credit for, there will be judgment of idea. When the comment is made that a paper "says something," it is being valued for recognizing a measure of reality or for being true in its assertions. Ultimately there is no evading the issue of whether any piece of writing predicates something about the world, either literally or imaginatively, and this is why I am arguing that, in teaching students to be articulate, we must hold up the standard of what is true. The man

who essays that task is doctor of philosophy in more than title, and he takes on stature.

Perhaps I should visualize for a moment the course I am urging. Here is our teacher, who is charged with the awful responsibility of telling a younger generation the true names of things, figuratively sitting with the dialectician at his elbow. What is the use of this counselor? I should say that his chief function is to keep the teacher out of the excluded middle. He is able to define, and he can see contradictions, and he is never going to say that B is only a mode of A. In short, he is going to stand guard against that relativism which has played havoc with so many things and which is now attacking language. He will save those points of reference which are disappearing as we fall into the trap of "infinite-valued orientation." The dialectician works through logic, which is itself an assurance that the world has order. True enough, there will not be much student-centered education here, and knowledge will take on an authority which some mistake for arrogance. The student will learn, however, that the world is not wholly contingent, but partly predictable, and that, if he will use his mind rightly, it will not lie to him about the world.

Let there be no mistake; this is an invitation to lead the dangerous life. Who so comes to define comes bearing the sword of division. The teacher will find

himself not excluded from the world but related to it in ways that may become trying. But he will regain something that has been lost in the long dilution of education, the standing of one with a mission. He will be able, as he has not been for a long while, to take his pay partly in honor.

It is often thoughtlessly said that the restoration of our broken world lies largely in the hands of the teachers. The statement is true, but the implications are not drawn. The teachers cannot contribute by teaching more disorder. When something has been broken, the repairman fixes it, with his mind not on the broken object but on the form according to which it was originally made. And so we who must repair some names that have fallen into strange distortions must not consult the distorted shapes but rather conceive the archetypes for which they stood.

A prominent educator was recently heard to declare that he hoped for a day when people would point with admiration to a member of the teaching profession and say, "Look, he is a teacher." We may be sure that day will not dawn until the remark carries the implication, "Look, he is a definer." For this reason teachers who think they have a part in the redemption of society will have to desert certain primrose paths of dalliance and begin the difficult, the dangerous, work of teaching men to speak and to write the truth.

Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English

JOHN S. KENYON*

THE word *level*, when used to indicate different styles of language, is a metaphor, suggesting higher or lower position and, like the terms *higher* and *lower*, figuratively implies 'better' or 'worse,' 'more desirable' or 'less desirable,' and similar comparative degrees of excellence or inferiority in language.

The application of the term *level* to those different styles of language that are not properly distinguished as better or worse, desirable or undesirable, creates a false impression. I confess myself guilty of this error along with some other writers. What are frequently grouped together in one class as different levels of language are often in reality false combinations of two distinct and incommensurable categories, namely, *cultural levels* and *functional varieties*.

Among *cultural levels* may be included, on the lower levels, illiterate speech, narrowly local dialect, ungrammatical speech and writing, excessive and unskillful slang, slovenly and careless vocabulary and construction, exceptional pronunciation, and, on the higher level, lan-

guage used generally by the cultivated, clear, grammatical writing, and pronunciations used by the cultivated over wide areas. The different cultural levels may be summarized in the two general classes *substandard* and *standard*.

Among *functional varieties* not depending on cultural levels may be mentioned colloquial language, itself existing in different degrees of familiarity or formality, as, for example, familiar conversation, private correspondence, formal conversation, familiar public address; formal platform or pulpit speech, public reading, public worship; legal, scientific, and other expository writing; prose and poetic belles-lettres. The different functional varieties may roughly be grouped together in the two classes *familiar* and *formal* writing or speaking.

The term *level*, then, does not properly belong at all to functional varieties of speech—colloquial, familiar, formal, scientific, literary language. They are equally "good" for their respective functions, and as classifications do not depend on the cultural status of the users.

The two groupings *cultural levels* and *functional varieties* are not mutually exclusive categories. They are based on entirely separate principles of classification: *culture* and *function*. Although we are here principally concerned with the functional varieties of standard English (the highest cultural level), yet sub-

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standard English likewise has its functional varieties for its different occasions and purposes. Thus the functional variety colloquial English may occur on a substandard cultural level, but the term *colloquial* does not itself designate a cultural level. So the functional variety formal writing or speaking may occur on a lower or on a higher cultural level according to the social status of writer or speaker, and sometimes of reader or audience. It follows, for instance, that the colloquial language of cultivated people is on a higher cultural level than the formal speech of the semiliterate or than some inept literary writing.

Semiliterate formal speech is sometimes heard from radio speakers. I recently heard one such speaker solemnly announce, "Sun day will be Mother's Day." Because the speaker, in his ignorance of good English, thought he was making himself plainer by using the distorted pronunciation *sun day* instead of the standard pronunciation *sundy*, he was actually misunderstood by some listeners to be saying, "Some day will be Mother's Day." About forty years ago the great English phonetician Henry Sweet used this very example to show that "we cannot make words more distinct by disguising them."² He was referring to the use, as in this instance, of the full sound of vowels in unaccented syllables where standard English has obscure vowels. On the same page Sweet gives another example of the same blunder: "Thus in the sentence *I shall be at home from one to three* the substitution of *tuw* for *ta* [ə = the last sound in *sofa*] at once suggests a confusion between the preposition and the numeral." This was also verified on the radio. Not long ago I heard a radio speaker announce care-

fully, "This program will be heard again tomorrow from one two three." I have also recorded (among many others) the following such substandard forms from the radio: *presidEnt* for the standard form *presidənt*, the days of the week ending in the full word *day* instead of the standard English syllable *-dy*, *ay man* for the correct *a man*, *cahnsider* for *consider*, *tooday* for *today*, *too go* for *to go*, *Coalumbia* for *Columbia*, etc. This is merely one sort among many of substandard features in the formal speech of the semiliterate.³

To begin my strictures at home, in *American Pronunciation* (9th ed., 4th printing, p. 17), I use the page heading "Levels of Speech." This should be "Functional Varieties of Standard Speech," for the reference is solely to the different uses of speech on the one cultivated level. Similarly, in the Kenyon-Knott *Pronouncing Dictionary of American English* (p. xvi, § 2), I carelessly speak of "levels of the colloquial" where I mean "styles of the colloquial," as three lines above. For though there are different cultural levels of colloquial English, the reference here is only to standard colloquial.

S. A. Leonard and H. Y. Moffett, in their study, "Current Definition of Levels in English Usage,"⁴ say (p. 348): "The levels of English usage have been most clearly described in Dr. Murray's Preface ['General Explanations,' p. xvii] to the *New English Dictionary*. I have varied his diagram a little in order to illustrate better the overlapping between the categories." It appears to me that Leonard and Moffett have so varied the diagram as to obscure Murray's intention.

² See further *American Speech*, VI, No. 5 (June, 1931), 368-72.

⁴ *English Journal*, XVI, No. 5 (May, 1927), 345-59.

² Henry Sweet, *The Sounds of English* (Oxford, 1910), p. 78.

For he is not here primarily exhibiting levels of speech but is showing the 'Anglicity,' or limits of the English vocabulary for the purposes of his dictionary.⁵ The only topical divisions of his diagram that imply a cultural level are "slang" and "dialectal," and the only statement in his explanation of the diagram that could imply it is, "Slang words ascend through colloquial use." This may imply that slang is at a lower cultural level than "colloquial, literary, technical, scientific, foreign." We may also safely infer that Murray would place "Dialectal" on a lower level than colloquial and literary if he were here concerned with cultural levels. Murray's diagram rests consistently on the same basis of classification throughout ('Anglicity'), and he emphasizes that "there is absolutely no defining line in any direction [from the central nucleus of colloquial and literary]." Moreover, Murray's exposition here concerns only vocabulary, with no consideration of the other features that enter so largely into "levels" of language—grammatical form and structure, pronunciation, spelling, and meaning—of styles, in short, only so far as they are affected by vocabulary. These he treats of elsewhere but without reference to levels.

It is not quite clear just how far Leonard and Moffett intend their grouping "literary English," "standard, cultivated, colloquial English," and "naif, popular, or uncultivated English" to be identical with what they call Murray's "levels," his description of which they commend. But it is clear that they call their own grouping "three levels of usage" (p. 357) and classify them together as a single descending scale (cf. "the low end of the scale," p. 358). The inevitable im-

⁵ The word *Anglicity* is a coinage of the *Oxford Dictionary*. They define it as 'English quality, as of speech or style; English idiom.'

pression that the average reader receives from such an arrangement of the scale is: Highest level, literary English; next lower level, colloquial English; lowest level, illiterate English; whereas, in fact, the first two "levels" are functional varieties of the one cultural level standard English, while the third ("illiterate or uncultivated," p. 358) is a cultural level.

Krapp has a chapter on "The Levels of English Speech,"⁶ in which he reveals some awareness of the confusion of cultural levels with functional varieties. He says:

Among those who pay any heed at all to convention in social relationships, a difference of degree is implicit in all use of English. This difference of degree is usually thought of in terms of higher and lower, of upper levels of speech appropriate to certain occasions of more formal character, of lower levels existing, if not necessarily appropriate, among less elevated circumstances. These popular distinctions of level may be accepted without weighting them too heavily with significance in respect of good, better, and best in speech. A disputatious person might very well raise the question whether literary English, ordinarily regarded as being on a high level, is really any better than the spoken word, is really as good as the spoken word, warm with the breath of the living moment.

At the risk of having to own the hard impeachment of being disputatious, I must express the fear that the logical fallacy in treating of levels, which Krapp rather lightly waves aside, is having a serious effect on general ideas of speech levels, and especially of the significance of colloquial English in good usage. Krapp's grouping, frankly on a scale of "levels" throughout, constitutes a descending scale from the highest, "Literary English," through "Formal Colloquial," "General Colloquial," "Popular English," to the lowest, "Vulgar Eng-

⁶ George Philip Krapp, *The Knowledge of English* (New York, 1927), pp. 55-76.

lish." Here the fallacy is obvious: Literary English, Formal Colloquial, and General Colloquial are not cultural levels but only functional varieties of English all on the one cultural level of standard English. The last two, Popular English and Vulgar English, belong in a different order of classification, cultural levels, without regard to function.

So in his succeeding discussion *level* sometimes means the one, sometimes the other; now a functional variety of standard English, and now a cultural level of substandard or of standard English. It is functional on page 58 ("a choice between two levels") and on page 60 ("level of general colloquial"), cultural on page 62 ("popular level" and "cultivated level") and on pages 63-64 ("popular level," "level of popular speech"), functional on page 64 ("general colloquial level"), cultural again on the same page ("popular level," "still lower level"), cultural on page 67 ("vulgar . . . level of speech," "applying the term 'vulgar' to it at certain levels"), cultural on page 68 ("its own [popular] level"), cultural and functional in the same phrase on page 68 ("speakers from the popular and the general colloquial level meet and mix"), and so on most confusingly to page 75.

The same kind of mixture of cultural levels and functional varieties is thrown into one apparently continuous scale by Kennedy: "There is the formal and dignified language of the scholarly or scientific address or paper. . . . The precision and stateliness of this uppermost level . . . is a necessary accompaniment of thinking on a high plane."⁷ Next in order he mentions colloquial speech, which he refers to as "the second level, . . . generally acceptable to people of education

and refinement." Clearly this is not a cultural level but a functional variety of standard English, like the "uppermost level." The third level is, however, a cultural one: "the latest slang," workmen's "technical slang and colloquialisms which other persons cannot comprehend," "grammatical solecisms." "The speech of this third level can fairly be ranked as lower in the social scale." His fourth level is also cultural: "At the bottom of the scale is the lingo, or cant, of criminals, hobos, and others of the lowest social levels."

Finally, Kennedy fixes the false mental image of a continuous and logically consistent descent from "the cold and lonely heights of formal and highly specialized scientific and scholarly language" to "the stupid and slovenly level of grammatical abuses and inane slang." In reality there is no cultural descent until we reach his third "level," since "formal and dignified language" and "colloquial speech" are only functional varieties of English on the one cultural level of standard English.

In Perrin's excellent and useful *Index*,⁸ under the heading "Levels of Usage," he names "three principal levels": "Formal English" (likened to formal dress), "Informal English" (described as "the typical language of an educated person going about his everyday affairs"), and "Vulgate English." From his descriptions it appears clearly that Formal and Informal English are functional varieties of standard English, while Vulgate is a substandard cultural level. A similar classification appears in his table on page 365.

On page 19 Perrin uses *level* apparently in the sense of functional variety, not of cultural level: "Fundamentally, good

⁷ Arthur G. Kennedy, *Current English* (Boston, 1935), pp. 15-17: "Speech Levels."

⁸ Porter G. Perrin, *An Index to English* (Chicago, 1939), pp. 364-65.

English is speaking or writing in the level of English that is appropriate to the particular situation that faces the speaker or writer. It means making a right choice among the levels of usage." His advice, however, involves two choices: (1) choice of a standard cultural level and (2) choice of the appropriate functional variety of that level.

A clear instance of the inconsistent use of the term *level* is found in Robert C. Pooley's *Teaching English Usage* (New York, 1946), chapter iii, "Levels in English Usage." He names five levels: (1) the illiterate level; (2) the homely level; (3) standard English, informal level; (4) standard English, formal level; and (5) the literary level. In (1) and (2) *level* has an altogether different meaning from that in (3), (4), and (5). In the first two *level* plainly means 'cultural level'; in the last three it just as plainly means 'functional variety of standard English,' all three varieties being therefore on the one cultural level of standard English. So *level* in the two groups belongs to different orders of classification. All misunderstanding and wrong implication would be removed from this otherwise excellent treatment of levels if the last three groups were labeled "Standard English Level, Informal Variety"; "Standard English Level, Formal Variety"; and "Standard English Level, Literary Variety." Pooley's groups contain three cultural levels (illiterate, homely, standard) and three functional varieties of the standard cultural level (informal, formal, literary).

The misapplication to colloquial English of the term *level*, metaphorically appropriate only to cultural gradations, is especially misleading. We often read of English that is "on the colloquial level." For example, Krapp writes: "Who do you mean? . . . has passed into current spo-

ken use and may be accepted on the colloquial level."⁹ This implies that colloquial English is on a different cultural level from formal English (literary, scientific, etc.), and a too frequent assumption, owing to this and other misuses of the term *colloquial*, is that its cultural level is below that of formal English. This supposition, tacit or explicit, that colloquial style is inferior to formal or literary style, leads inescapably to the absurd conclusion that, whenever scientists or literary artists turn from their formal writing to familiar conversation with their friends, they thereby degrade themselves to a lower social status.

This misuse of *level* encourages the fallacy frequently met with of contrasting colloquial with standard English, logically as fallacious as contrasting white men with tall men. For instance, Mencken writes: "I have no doubt *but* that . . . seems to be very firmly lodged in colloquial American, and even to have respectable standing in the standard speech."¹⁰ This contrast, not always specifically stated, is often implied. For example, Kennedy writes: "Colloquial English is, properly defined, the language of conversation, and especially of familiar conversation. As such it may approximate the standard speech of the better class of English speakers, or it may drop to the level of the illiterate and careless speaker."¹¹ *May approximate* should be replaced by *may be on the level of*.

Similarly, on page 440: "Some measure words [are] still used colloquially without any ending in the plural . . . ;

⁹ *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English* (New York, 1927), p. 641.

¹⁰ H. L. Mencken, *The American Language* (4th ed.; New York, 1936), p. 203.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

but most of these are given the *s* ending in standard English usage." Here *standard* is confused with *formal*.

Kennedy (pp. 534, 616) several times contrasts colloquial English with "standard literary English." This implies that colloquial English is not standard, while literary English is. If he means to contrast standard colloquial with standard literary, well and good; but I fear that most readers would understand the contrast to be of colloquial with standard.¹²

The term *colloquial* cannot properly designate a substandard cultural level of English. It designates a functional variety—that used chiefly in conversation—and in itself says nothing as to its cultural level, though this discussion, and the dictionary definitions, are chiefly concerned with cultivated colloquial, a functional variety of standard English. When writers of such standing as those I have mentioned slip into expressions that imply lower cultural status of colloquial English, it is not surprising that some teachers fall into the error. One teacher expressed the conviction that colloquialisms should not be represented as standard American speech. But the context of the statement indicated that its author was using *colloquialism* in the sense of 'localism.' I could hardly believe how frequent this gross error is, until I heard

¹² Greenough and Kittredge in *Words and Their Ways in English Speech* (New York, 1909), chap. vii, only apparently treat literary English as the sole standard form: "What is the origin of standard or literary English?" (p. 80). They use *standard* in a special sense for their particular purpose, calling it "the common property of all but the absolutely illiterate," "the language which all educated users of English speak and write" (therefore including colloquial). For the usual current meaning, see the definitions of *standard* quoted in *American Pronunciation* (6th and subsequent eds.), pp. 14-15.

it from a well-known American broadcaster.¹³

The best dictionaries, at least in their definitions, give no warrant for the various misuses of *colloquial*, *colloquially*, *colloquialism*, *colloquiality*. I urge the reader to study carefully the definitions in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, with its many apt examples from standard writers, and in *Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition*, with its quotations from George Lyman Kittredge. Kittredge's views on the standing of colloquial English are well known. It is said that somebody once asked him about the meaning of the label "Colloq." in dictionaries. He is reported to have replied, "I myself speak 'colloke' and often write it." I cannot verify the story, but it sounds authentic.

It seems to me inevitable that the frequent groupings of so-called "levels" such as "Literary, Colloquial, Illiterate," and the like, will lead the reader to suppose that just as Illiterate is culturally below Colloquial, so Colloquial is culturally below Literary. While I can scarcely hope that my humble remonstrance will reform all future writing on "levels of English," I believe that writers who confuse the meaning of the term *level* must accept some part of the responsibility for the popular misunderstanding of the true status of colloquial English; for I cannot avoid the belief that the popular idea of colloquial English as something to be looked down upon with disfavor is due in part to the failure of writers on the subject to distinguish between *cultural levels of English* and *functional varieties of standard English*.

¹³ Leonard and Moffett also mention the frequency of this blunder (*op. cit.*, p. 351, n. 5).

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, JULIUS BERNSTEIN, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*chairman*)
JAMES B. MCMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

WHOM

The *NED* defines "whom" as "the objective case of *who*" and adds, "no longer current in natural colloquial speech." In the *Shorter Oxford*, the "natural" of this dictum is changed to "unstudied." The change improves the dictum, as it puts the emphasis where it belongs: on style. In studied style "whom" has its place; in unstudied style it is out of place. Of course, colloquial speech naturally goes with unstudied style, and the "natural" of the *NED* dictum therefore has its justification; so much so, indeed, that any use of "whom" in everyday, ordinary talk sounds stilted and to that extent "unnatural." It remains true, however, that some people are naturally stilted, stiff, and formal, and it was out of consideration for such people, one may suppose, that the editor of the *Shorter Oxford* changed the wording of the dictum about "whom."

But if it is bad English to use "whom" in unstudied style, what does one use instead? In interrogative constructions "who" commonly serves both for the nominative and the objective, without sacrifice of clarity. Examples: Studied style, "Whom will you take?" "To whom are you writing?" Unstudied style, "Who will you take?" "Who are you writing to?"

The want of a special objective form here obviously does not keep the questions from being perfectly clear. The second example is of special interest as an illustration of the fact that in many cases a mere substitution of "who" for "whom" is not enough to change the style from studied to unstudied. It would never do to say, "To who are you writing?" And this for the simple reason that objective "who" must precede its preposition (either immediately or with one or more words between). This was not always

true. In Shakespeare's day it was proper enough to ask the question "To who?"¹ But nowadays one must say "Who to?" Our second example also shows us that final position for a preposition is a mark of unstudied style. Now and then, it is true, one sees sentences like this: "Whom are you writing to?" One must condemn such a sentence, however, as a stylistic monstrosity. Its "whom" marks it as done in studied style, whereas its word order marks it as done in unstudied style! No good stylist should be guilty of such gross inconsistency, an error which inevitably spoils the stylistic effect. Indeed, one may venture to doubt whether a person capable of perpetrating "Whom are you writing to?" or the like has much feeling for stylistic distinctions in English.

In relative constructions "who" as well as "whom" belongs to studied style. One must therefore avoid all forms of this relative pronoun if one wishes to express one's self in unstudied style. The only relative available is "that"; alternatively, one may omit the relative. Thus, in studied style one might say, "The man of whom you speak is not present." In unstudied style this would become, "The man (that) you speak of isn't here." If the relative clause is not restrictive, more radical changes may be needed. Thus, the following sentence is in studied style: "Mr. Smith, from whom I heard today, has confirmed the report." In changing to unstudied style, the hypotactic construction must be made paratactic, as follows: "I heard from Mr. Smith today, and he has confirmed the report." It will be noted that the change to unstudied style cannot be made in this case without giving up the relative construction altogether.

The use of "whom" as a nominative is

¹ See, e.g., *Othello*, Act I, scene 2, l. 53.

familiar in sentences of the type "There goes a man whom I thought was out of town." The style of this sentence would be improved by omission of the relative; "whom" here as everywhere gives a studied effect out of place in a sentence which otherwise sounds unstudied. Not infrequently, however, nominative "whom" occurs in sentences obviously meant to give a studied stylistic effect. Example (from Galsworthy): "the girl's admiration for one whom she could see would in no circumstances lose her dignity." In such cases there can be no stylistic objection to "whom." In the name of grammar, nominative "whom" has often been condemned, of course. I will not attempt to go into the grammatical aspects of the matter. The curious reader will find a full discussion in the late Otto Jespersen's *Modern English Grammar* (1927), III, 197 ff. Here it will be enough to say that Jespersen defends the construction with "whom" not on the ground that "whom" is actually used as a nominative by plenty of good writers and speakers but on the ground that "a subject need not always be in the nominative."

KEMP MALONE

CANNOT HELP BUT

For some years the status of "cannot help but plus infinitive" has been variously defined by grammarians, handbook compilers, and other commentators on usage. For example, Jespersen¹ states that in England it is customary to use the construction with the gerund ("cannot help *admiring, singing, etc.*"), whereas in America the negative expression with "but" is preferred. Woolley² advises writers to avoid "cannot help but." Curme³ points out that the idiom with

¹ Otto Jespersen, "Negation in English and Other Languages," *Det Kgl. Danske Vidensk. Selsk. Hist.-filo. Meddesler*, I, 5 (Copenhagen, 1917), p. 80.

² Edwin C. Wooley, *Handbook of College Composition* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1926), p. 271. The 1943 edition of this work (Woolley and Scott) does not mention this idiom.

³ G. O. Curme, *Syntax* (New York: D. C. Heath & Co., 1931), p. 252.

"but" "is constructed after an old pattern once widely used. . . . *Choose* has the same meaning and construction, but is not so common." Kennedy⁴ classifies the idiom with other double negatives and comments thus: "The use of double negatives is . . . no longer tolerated in standard literary usage." Marckwardt and Walcott⁵ label the idiom as "Literary English." And Perrin,⁶ although classifying *cannot help but* as "Familiar, vulgate," remarks that it "is so commonly used in speaking and writing that perhaps it should be regarded as good English."

My study of this idiom shows that the picture is about as follows: "*Cannot help but* plus infinitive" has but one entry in the *OD* (*Help*, v. 11 b, 1894). However, this idiom appeared much earlier with the verb "choose" (cannot "choose" but hear) instead of with the verb "help." The idiom with "choose" flourished from ca. 1542 to ca. 1890.⁷ The earliest example of the idiom with "help" which I have been able to find is in Keats (*Endym.*, Bk. iv, l. 449). In fact, "cannot help but" seems never to have become well established in British literature. As I have just mentioned, there is but one entry recorded for it in the *OD*, and, after a rather extensive sampling of British writers from 1900 to the present, I was able to find but four more: one from Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889); one from Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* (1892); and one each from Walpole's *The Cathedral* (1922) and *A Prayer for My Son* (1936). British writers during this period used either "cannot but

⁴ A. G. Kennedy, *Current English* (New York: Ginn & Co., 1935), p. 534.

⁵ *Facts about Current English Usage* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938), p. 44.

⁶ Porter G. Perrin, *Writer's Guide and Index to English* (New York: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1942), p. 406.

⁷ Under *Choose*, v. B. 5 b, the *OD* lists examples from Udall, Shakespeare, Bayley, Hobbes, Richardson, Coleridge, and Froude. I have found the idiom in Spenser, Shakespeare (twenty-three examples), Milton, Bunyan, Congreve, Wordsworth (nine examples), Keats (three examples), Browning (six examples), Meredith, Tennyson, Morris, and Pater.

plus infinitive" or "cannot help plus gerund." We may conclude, therefore, that "cannot help but plus infinitive" has never been widely used by British writers and that it is not standard written English in Great Britain today.

In American English the picture has been and still is somewhat different. "Cannot choose but plus infinitive" never has become established, for I have found but five examples: three from Emerson (one each in "Nature," "The Transcendentalist," and a letter to Carlyle); one from Lowell's "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration"; and one from Whittier's "The Two Rabbits."

With respect to "cannot help but plus infinitive" in American literature, I have found a few scattered examples from 1903 to 1925. However, from about 1930 on, the idiom with "help" seems to have become established.

In a limited article, such as this one, I can list only a few representative sources from which I have gathered my examples within the last four or five years. Thus, Professor Elmer E. Stoll used it in his book *Poets and Playwrights* (1930). Mr. Henry Hazlitt used it in the *Literary Digest*, October 8, 1932. I found it in Josephine Johnson's Pulitzer Prize novel, *Now in November* (1934). Writers for the *New York Times Book Review*⁸ use it. There is one example in the January, 1938, issue of the *English Journal* (college edition), and another one in the June, 1943, issue of the same periodical (high-school edition). The idiom appears rather frequently in *Harper's Magazine* and occasionally in the

Atlantic Monthly. I have also found it in such magazines as *School and Society*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and *Theatre Arts Monthly*. Mr. Joseph E. Davies used it in *Mission to Moscow* and so did Mr. Sumner Wells in *The Time for Decision* and the late Professor William E. Sedgwick in *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind*. Furthermore, I have also found the idiom now and then in the editorials and the columns of news commentators in local and metropolitan newspapers.

This evidence seems to show rather conclusively that "cannot help but plus infinitive" is well established in present-day written American English, both formal and informal.

Of the four idioms which educated Americans now use to express this particular form of negation, the one which appears most frequently in standard written English is "cannot help plus gerund," with "cannot but plus infinitive" running a close second, and "can but plus infinitive" and "cannot help but plus infinitive" about evenly divided for third place. These four idioms are used interchangeably, and, if the facts which I have gathered in my investigation mean anything at all, we can no longer classify "cannot help but plus infinitive" as acceptable only on the colloquial and/or vulgar levels of usage.

As far as spoken American English is concerned, the idiom is also well established. I have heard it over the radio from a commentator on a Toscanini broadcast, I have heard it used by college commencement speakers, by ministers, by college and university professors, and by other speakers.

RUSSELL THOMAS

⁸ See the following issues: November 24, 1935, p. 6; October 4, 1936, p. 1; June 6, 1937, p. 3; and October 21, 1945, p. 4.

Round Table

A NOTE ON INTENTIONS

The Editors have asked me to reply to the several persons who have expressed criticisms of my analysis of "Head by Scopas" in "The Critical Reader" (*College English*, April, 1948). The main objection is that I have read far more symbolic meaning into the story than the author intended. The question is whether what the author meant to say coincides with what I say is his meaning. If the two intentions coincide (the original intention of the author and the actual intention of the work as my analysis interprets it), then—according to the assumption on which their objection is based—my reading of the story must be the final or authoritative one. As corollary to this assumption, it follows that where no author is available to make verification, only then may we allow as many interpretations as there are readers; but not otherwise. The author alone knows what he meant to say; consequently we, his readers, since we can never fully know his intention in terms of the work alone, must consult the author in order to establish what his work intends.

Now it happens that I have consulted the author of "Head by Scopas," and I have Mr. Edward Donahoe's word for it that my interpretation coincides with his intention. I suppose that I should derive some satisfaction from this lucky correlation. My reading, since it squares with the interpretation which the author intended, precludes all criticisms of it by other critics; this version is the authorized one.

"A lot of this is damned good, but, honestly, do you really think Donahoe was as precise as all this?"

There are two ways to phrase this question. Both versions take us back, out of the work, into the inspiration of the work or its germinal situation. One way is to ask whether or not the author schematized all

those symbolic contrivances—planted them in this sequence rather than in some other—so that they cohere to form the single configuration of meaning which I claim his work imparts. I think that we have already answered this question. The author himself did the schematizing—not I! His intended meaning I refabricated, nothing more. As to the question put the second way, it is whether the author contrived the work consciously, by a process of pure intellect—or unconsciously, by a process of pure intuition. I think the answer is partly yes and partly no: it wasn't by pure luck that those symbolic particulars got themselves ordered into their proper or most effective relationship, nor was it solely by a laboring of the thinking mind. However, only an Anatomy of Inspiration can supply us the true answer, and to undertake this inquiry would require, probably, a good psychiatrist trained in literary strategy. Perhaps this is what Mr. Donahoe had in mind when he wrote: "I suppose I really did intend, unconsciously, the symbolism you found in my story."

Between the intent of the author and my reading of his work, then, there is no disparity. To grant validity to this correlation, however, presupposes that an author's avowed intention is identical with his achieved one; but how can we ascertain this identity of intentions? According to this conception, a work does not possess objective, intrinsic, or resident values; it possesses only subjective, extrinsic, or nonresident values. And the criteria for judgment is located in external, rather than internal, evidence. The avowed intention of the author and/or the private history of his work provide the true key to the meaning of his work and the ultimate grounds for evaluating it. The critic uses a work of art as a training field for a reconstruction of the author's original inten-

tion, and the critic's practice is judged accordingly—not by other critics, but by the author himself, since he is the only one who can properly measure the success of the critic's correlation.

Now, for my part, these assumptions are false and the questions based upon them misleading. This widely held intention-concept is a psychological heresy; it is pseudo-criticism. No author knows fully what he "intended" in process of creation. And no critic (Tillyard to the contrary) can actually reconstruct the author's germinal state of mind or original intention—if there was one. And even if the author does refabricate his blueprint or process of creation (as Poe and Spender have done), this avowed and externally ascertainable intention constitutes external evidence and is thus critically irrelevant or supererogatory. The only concrete and full revelation of his state of mind is the work which has issued from it (Wimsatt). Since the creative process "is a process of discovery which objectifies itself as a making," the artist does not know his actual intention until he creates it (R. P. Warren). Often his only "intention" may be to make a work of art. "Intentions are nothing in art except as realized" (F. R. Leavis). The only thing the artist can know to be what he meant to say is what he said—in the work (Croce). And once he has created it he becomes simply another reader of his work and, as such, is liable to misinterpret it (Wellek). The author's supposed intention must not be allowed to modify our interpretation (G. Wilson Knight). Even if the author does contradict our interpretation, his criterion of intention is irrelevant unless corroborated by the actual intention, which is the meaning embodied within the work itself. Once a work of art is produced, it possesses objective status—it exists independently of the author's intention and contains within itself the reason why it is thus and not otherwise—and it takes unconditional precedence over any externally ascertainable information that author or scholar may provide. Irrelevant to the objective status of the work as a work of art are criteria which dis-

solve the work into the historical process (Tate). The prime criterion is that of internal relevance of part to whole.

All parts of a work of art are, ideally, relevant or functional to the unification of the whole. Analysis discovers what is intended by each part and determines what this is by the relevance of the meaning of each part to the single intention of the whole. All analyses are open to criticism, all judgments are corrigible. Analysis is a process of collaboration by many readers (Eliseo Vivas). The critic is the ideal reader.

My essay, "The Critical Reader" (an excerpt from a forthcoming textbook), illustrates technical criticism in relation to exegetical and critical theory. It presents a method for teaching a short story, and by this method the essay forces into focus a good many of the critical questions which students inevitably raise. It was for this critical purpose, to provoke these questions, that I wrote the essay.

ROBERT WOOSTER STALLMAN

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LIMITING RESEARCH-PAPER SUBJECTS

I became dissatisfied with giving freshmen perfect freedom to choose subjects for research papers, limited only by the stipulation that they avoid esoteric technical subjects. The papers revealed a triviality and a narrowness of interest hardly worthy of a liberal-arts college. Few students ever faced the great questions of our day. Girls wrote on "Vitamin C" and "Nylons"; men wrote on "Arc Welding" and "Butchering Hogs."

Ominous were subjects repeated semester after semester. There was a cluster of topics I could expect each time: "The Cure of Cancer," "The Cause of Heart Disease," "Voodoo in Haiti," "The History of Baseball," "The History of Drama," and "Socialized Medicine." The ennui of reading those hackneyed topics made it difficult to grade them fairly; and I lacked technical knowledge to check their veracity.

Then what could be done? Completely abolishing freedom of choice would be an opposite evil. Accepting or rejecting each individual selection would be time-consuming and unfair. Then I decided to limit the area for research, yet to permit freedom to choose within that area. I would define an area interesting to me and probably to the student—and, if not initially interesting, of enough importance to attract him.

The first time, I limited the research subjects to studies of a racial or national minority in the United States or of a foreign population problem. I had interest and information here; all students should be interested because they were all members of minorities or interested in some neighboring minority. I had to rescue the term "minority" from Sociology; for many did not realize that Scotch-Irish, English, and Huguenot French are also minority terms. The students had seen how Germany's failure to solve her minority problem had led to Hitler and war; they could see that our own failure might result in dictatorship, also.

Teaching that paper was a lot of fun for us. I used to like Indians; now I had an incentive to browse among books about Indians. I spent two periods arousing interest—with maps and talk of Navajos and Lulos. Teaching formal organization was easier; we had a common ground that I could use for illustration. Once they were started, my students chose their subjects enthusiastically—and better than I could have chosen for them.

My seventy-five papers that semester were as interesting a set as ever I examined. I got the American minorities, all right—the Finns, the Swedes, the Indiana Amish, the Portuguese, the Pennsylvania Gipsies. I got Seminoles, Apaches, Sioux, and Miamis. I learned the truth about Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Chamorros of Guam, and the Hukbalahaps. I got the Ainus, the Lulos, the Somalis, and Negro problems in South Africa.

The next semester, I limited the research area to Latin America. More than the previous group of papers, these researches gave room for individual differences in students.

Two business-administration boys elected the "Cuban Sugar Problem" and the "American Impact on Panamanian Economy," respectively. Two education students examined education in Costa Rica and Mexico. A sociologist described the absorption of the Negro into Brazilian nationality. Our preacher studied Peruvian Protestantism. A government major described the rise of Peron to power, and a girl interested in biography gave me a noteworthy account of Trujillo's career.

This plan of choosing a limited area for research has vitalized my attitude toward teaching research, because the subjects are interesting to me. My students are interested, also, for they like a combination of guidance with independence to explore a new area. For this plan, all that an instructor needs is an area wherein he is interested which can easily become of interest to the student—and adequate bibliographical material for each student.

HARGIS WESTERFIELD
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

AN OPEN LETTER FROM A COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHER.

Professor Blankman Blankson, Chairman
The Department of English
Humble University

MY DEAR PROFESSOR BLANKSON:

I am grateful for your answer to my inquiry of last week about the possibility of my being considered for a position on your staff. As modestly as I may, I acknowledge your high praise of my record as an undergraduate, my degree *summa cum laude* from your great sister-institution, my traveling fellowship in Europe, my record in graduate study, my combat record during four years in the Army, and my teaching record of the last three years at two outstanding colleges.

I agree, however, that I am morally in an extremely questionable position because I have had the effrontery to acquire a wife and family before finishing my Ph.D. This condition, coupled with my lack of foresight in

neglecting to be born with an independent income, makes it necessary that I finish my doctorate at the same time that I earn my living by teaching. It also makes it necessary for me to demand a salary equal to that paid by your institution (as you put it) only to those who have taught two years "after the doctorate." It is with shame I agree that I am essentially a scab. You obviously could not employ me at the salary I ask without undermining the very real financial value of the Ph.D. which Humble awards. I am sure that such a specific statement of the rank and salary scale as your administration has set up is a great boon to the Heads of Departments and Committees on Appointments. It saves a great deal of individual consideration and assessment of imponderables, such as teaching ability, personality, and other characteristics of a successful teacher. It has the truly admirable evaluating efficiency of the famous bed of Procrustes. There is, I suppose, in connection with your Commencement ceremonies, at the moment the sheepskin is presented to the new Ph.D., some inoculation of a liquid which alone is able to make teaching experience "take." All teaching experience before the Ph.D. is thus, of course, useless.

It is now obvious to me, also, that I do not belong in teaching. For I have made the great mistake of assuming that a wide experience of the world and of all kinds of life could go to testing and toughening the demands I make on literature and could make my teaching of it a real means of coping with the atomized dilemma of modern man in a science-drunk world. Some of my students have been equally mistaken in thinking that the results have been of value for their process of education. I realize that I should have refrained from living while the process of getting a Ph.D. finished making

me incapable of life. With those magic letters after my name, my inability to do anything to help the Humanities assert values in a world of science would have been sufficiently attested to make a great University, such as yours, willing to pay me a decent salary to go on not-living in the accepted fashion. I humbly apologize for having been so blind as to believe that the institutions of Higher Education in America are interested in educating. I realize that what they are interested in is Education, which seems to be a very different thing.

Of course, some rebellious institution of education may still consider my kind of experience, brought to bear on literature in the teaching process, of value in some obscure experiments they are making in the shadows on the fringes of American Education. They may even be willing to pay me enough to exist on. I hope you will not feel that they are thereby ruining the racket. After all, when the same sort of process that you are fostering took place in Germany, when the Professors of Literature had inculcated the sort of literary taste which made a great nation hail *Mein Kampf* as a great work of literature, the Philistines of Education went down with the great associations of scholars in the general ruin. You may yet have the inestimable comfort of seeing your rebels thus confounded.

Yours very fraternally and cordially,
JOHN J. NEOPHYTE, *Artium Magister*

[The foregoing is a purely imaginative statement. Any similarity therein implied to the present quandary of human beings who want to be teachers is, of course, merely coincidental.]

FREDERIC E. PAMP, JR.
SMITH COLLEGE
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Report and Summary

About Literature

"AUDEN AND THE TRADITION," BY John Bradbury in the summer *Western Review*, assesses the poetry of W. H. Auden, particularly in relation to his *Collected Poems*, published in 1945. The exclusions and inclusions in this volume, according to Bradbury, mark out Auden's aesthetic and intellectual position, and the poet who emerges is "a serious, and on the whole, consistent artist." He has arrived at his intellectual position through his conversion to Christianity by a directly logical route: "The concept of original sin followed almost inevitably from his preoccupation with mass guilt, by way of his disillusion with Marxist collectivism. On the positive side, the affirmations of love and brotherhood which had recurred in his earlier poetry found in the Christ story the necessary extension and objectification. In the language of Yeats, Christianity had brought him symbols for his poetry." His diction, imagery, and verse reflect a full range of sympathies and interests. He uses a great variety of verse forms and is master of intricate metrical patterns but generally avoids the larger, more demanding structures. Bradbury thinks that the oratorio frame of *For the Time Being* is the form in which Auden has achieved his best. The tradition which he inherited was intensely subjective. He broke with it by extending the area of his concern toward the objectivity of the drama and "liberalized both diction and verse patterns toward a more public idiom." But he is still essentially a lyricist and satirist.

"SYMBOLISM IN COLERIDGE," BY Elmer Edgar Stoll in the June *PMLA*, deals primarily with "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan" and the contemporary symbolist critics of those poems, Kenneth Burke and R. P. Warren. After outlining in some

detail their interpretations, Stoll goes on to give extended evidence why, in his opinion, these critics suffer from three fundamental failings: they ignore the principle which Pope has phrased, "A perfect Judge will read each work of Wit/With the same spirit that the author writ"; they have not greatly profited by Coleridge's own utterances upon the critical principle and process; they haven't profited at all by reading Professor Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu*. The chief trouble with the symbolists, he concludes, as critics or as poets, "is a sophisticated, an inflated conception of either criticism or poetry." Although the symbolists have perhaps more on their side than Stoll is in the mood to give them, his own exegesis provides a sensible antidote to some of the more "inflated conceptions" of the "new criticism." A more sympathetic discussion of Kenneth Burke's theory of poetry, by B. I. Duffey, appears in the spring *Western Review*.

"ITALIAN LITERATURE IN 1947," BY O. A. Bontemps in the April *Modern Language Journal*, surveys the whole range of literary activity last year in Italy. This, it appears, did not sustain the surge and vitality of the two years preceding. Although there was a great deal of it, Italian literature reflected the setback of the entire world in its political and artistic deterioration. Among newly established periodicals is *Italy's Life*, published bimonthly in Milan, all in English, for the purpose of fostering Italian-American cultural and business relations.

"THE LITERARY SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA," by H. M. Green, appears in the summer number of *English*, the magazine of the English Association. Australian literature, which really did not begin until the

last decade of the nineteenth century, is now, it appears, in a flourishing second growth which lacks the advantages and disadvantages of strong critical guidance. It has changed considerably from its earlier stages, but "its ultimate root is still in the inconstant seasons and the immense dry stretches of perhaps never-to-be really settled countryside." This article discusses the major Australian writers active today, analyzing their styles and most characteristic works.

"LITERARY VERSIONS OF AMERICAN Folk Materials," by Ernest E. Leisy in the *California Folklore Quarterly*, extends his discussion on "Folklore in American Literature" which appeared two years ago in *College English* (VIII [1946], 122-29).

THE ANNUAL UNIVERSITY PRESS issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature* (June 5) is worth checking for its bird's-eye view of current university publications. "Dusting the Ivy Towers," by Datus C. Smith, Jr., the lead article, discusses how things are, just now, among the university presses, and Joseph Brandt contributes an editorial, "Intellectual Slave Market," a plea for a genuine scholarship "for those people who desperately want leadership in truth and certainty."

"ROBERT FROST AND NEW ENGLAND: A Revaluation," by W. G. O'Donnell, and "David Copperfield," by E. K. Brown, in the summer *Yale Review* will be helpful to teachers for one and the same important reason: both show clearly how the true artist, whether a poet or novelist, bends his style to give full effect to his idea, and does not merely develop a style as such.

O'Donnell's essay is valuable also because he surveys the whole range of Frost's poems by way of the eight published collections and attempts to determine to what extent he is or isn't a regional poet and in what directions his growth as a poet has extended. O'Donnell finds that Frost at his best most certainly is not merely a New England poet.

"North of Boston" he considers the major achievement of the poet's career because in it he "makes New England universal in its meaning and application." O'Donnell cites "The Hill Wife," "Birches," "Stopping by Woods," "Acquainted with Night," and "Directive" as some of the other poems in which Frost reaches this plane of universal experience. In these poems "the language is effective not because it has specific connections with a region but because Frost has made his characteristic rhythms and twists of phrase appropriate to the total experience of poetry." But, according to O'Donnell, Frost reaches his best in less than a score of poems, not all of them composed in any one period of his career. "North of Boston," for example, was his second major publication; "Directive" is one of his latest, appearing in his latest collection, called *Steeplejack*. The summing-up of Frost's attitude toward New England and toward existence in general O'Donnell thinks is to be found in "Directive"—in that poem's expression of the difficulty of finding the true source of spiritual strength.

In his essay on *David Copperfield* Professor Brown places Dickens, as a craftsman, somewhere between Scott and Balzac. Both Dickens' ideas and his structure, he says, "are far more masterly than common belief allows." *David Copperfield* is the autobiography of Dickens up to his twenty-eighth year. Professor Brown shows how, through the introduction of invented characters and incidents and through other bendings of his style and plot, Dickens gave to the story of his life a reality which a mere autobiography is not likely to have. As Brown puts it, "Dickens renders fully and with heightened colors his own childhood and youth, but he frames this personal sequence as a part of a larger world." That is why even today the story still has vitality and reality.

THEATRE ARTS RECENTLY COMBINED with *Stage Magazine*. The union has produced a publication retaining the title of the first and the rather slick format of the second. The articles are, for the most part,

briefer, snappier, less detailed, and less literary than those of the old *Theatre Arts*. The range is about the same. It appears that we shall have to look elsewhere for the more leisurely, thoroughly informed dramatic essays which we have long associated with *Theatre Arts* or be content with such newsy accounts of theater doings as comprise the contents of the June-July issue. These include, among numerous others, a few tantalizing paragraphs largely entitled "Accent on Youth," about the fifteen hundred children's theater projects throughout the country and the announcement of the formation of a National Association of Children's Theatres under the supervision of ANTA; another tantalizing sketch, "Footlights in Korea," on the astonishing rise of the theater in Korea since the liberation; a longer, more satisfactory account of the exciting community theater at Cleveland Heights, Ohio; and a brief treatment of the importance of the Amherst College Theatre as an experimental theater. The illustrative photographs are profuse and excellent and include a considerable number of stage sets used in recent college and university productions ranging from *Othello* and *Lamp at Midnight* to *Alice in Wonderland*.

"WHAT'S PLAYING AT THE GROVE?" in the August *Fortune* is the account of a small independent movie operator in Galesburg, Illinois, and how he competes with the local Paramount Theater. Inherent in his problems are, of course, the age-old theatrical questions: "What does the public want?" "How good is public taste?" "How far can the theater mold it?"—all still further complicated by the contemporary stranglehold of the monopolies upon the movie industry. Happily there are still a few brave souls left who are willing to risk financial loss for independence, and in so doing help to keep alive the vestigial remains of freedom in the theater. Specific facts and figures of the problems of such hardy operators are given in this article, which should provide considerable material for meditation by all persons interested in improving the standards of moving pictures.

SMOLLETT CRITICISM, 1925-1945: A Compilation is a useful little bibliography for eighteenth-century specialists, which may be obtained from the author, Dr. Francesco Cordasco, Long Island University, Brooklyn, N.Y. Ten pages; price, \$1.00.

LINE, A NEW LITTLE MAGAZINE, dedicated to presenting the best in creative writing, appeared this spring. *Line* welcomes the work of new writers, is published at 634 North Juanita Avenue, Los Angeles 4, Calif. Subscription, \$2.00 a year. The first issue contains both fiction and poetry and includes an interesting radio script adapted from *Moby Dick* by Brainerd Duffield. This has already been broadcast by Orson Welles over CBS and recorded for Decca by Charles Laughton. An expanded version for the stage is scheduled to be performed in London and Paris, next April, with a musical score by Bernard Herrman.

MANUSCRIPTS, PUBLISHED IN MAY by the English Department of the University of Pittsburgh, under the editorship of Edwin L. Peterson, contains thirty-five pages of some of the best graduate and undergraduate writing we have seen in recent months. Could be very helpful for use with students to show them what others are doing. Price, \$0.25.

WITH THE SPRING CAME, ALSO, A new literary quarterly, the *Hudson Review*; address, 39 West 11th St., New York 11. subscription: \$3.00 a year; Canadian and foreign, \$4.00. As indicated in both its prefatory note and its format, it will endeavor to encourage imaginative talent without foundering upon such dangerous reefs as vagary and pedantry. The first issue is competent but does not provide anything of startling worth or originality. The lead article is a critical essay, by R. P. Blackmur, on Dostoevski's *The Possessed*. Another, "Technique as Discovery," by Mark Schorer, contains much of what he said in his "Notes on Fiction" address at the San Francisco Convention. "A Letter from England," by D. S. Savage, presents a rather glum picture

of current literature in Britain. There are also poems and reviews.

LANGUAGE LEARNING. A NEW quarterly journal of applied linguistics, has also made its appearance this year, under the direction of David W. Reed, with Professors Charles C. Fries and Kenneth L. Pike, of the University of Michigan, and W. Freeman Twaddell, of Brown University, as editorial advisers. It proposes to print articles dealing with descriptive rather than historical linguistics, those based on the inductive findings of linguistic science rather than the more conventional grammatical analyses, and those which will contribute to the improvement of foreign-language learning and teaching. Published by the Research Club in Language Learning, 1522 Rackham Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. Subscription, \$2.00 a year.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM—FREEdom for people to write, think, read, discuss, and disseminate the printed word—was the keynote of the week-long sixty-seventh annual conference of the American Library Association in Atlantic City in June.

Paul North Rice, outgoing president of

the ALA and chief of the reference department, New York Public Library; Pearl Buck; Luther Evans, head of the Library of Congress; Robert E. Leigh, director of the Public Library Inquiry, New York; and others condemned censorship, book-banning, and the search of libraries for "un-American" books.

On Friday, June 18, the ALA took action. It reaffirmed the "Library Bill of Rights," originally promulgated in 1939, setting forth the library association's belief that all library books should be selected and made available to the general public without discrimination on grounds of the race, nationality, or political or religious views of the writer, or because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval; and that library facilities, such as meeting-rooms, be open to the public without regard to beliefs or affiliations of users, as long as they are used for "socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of public questions."

The ALA also adopted a resolution condemning "the use of loyalty investigations in libraries, in the firm belief that the security of the state can best be maintained by defending, against all attacks, the basic freedoms which are our nation's most treasured heritage."

About Teaching

THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CONFERENCE on English initiated in 1944 a study of the experience of American colleges with army and navy basic trainees in classes in English. The report of the committee, recently published, finds the reading, spelling, and logical-thinking ability of these high-school graduates (from all sections of the country) deplorable. It lays much of the blame upon the overload most high-school teachers of English carry, but it blames also lack of intensive work in reading, the use for discussion of time which should be devoted to writing, too many political, economic, etc., topics in the English classes, too much time devoted to literature. These are obviously guesses, for the one hundred and six

college teachers disagreed considerably among themselves and frequently showed unfamiliarity with what goes on in most high schools. The report is worth reading but is not convincing.

THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION's tenth administration of its National Teacher Examinations will take place shortly. These are administered through the facilities of the Educational Testing Service, and examining centers are conducted in co-operation with school systems and teacher-education institutions. Arrangements for the establishment of such centers should be made by superintendents of schools and college officials before November 15, 1948. For

further information, address: Director, National Teacher Examination Project, Educational Testing Service, 15 Amsterdam Ave., New York 23.

"ZEAL FOR DEMOCRACY" IS A large-scale project launched, this year, by the Office of Education. The May issue of *Higher Education* discusses it from several angles, including an article by Henry H. Armsby on "Colleges Teach and Practice Democracy." This is a brief digest of statements from 180 colleges and universities outlining activities intending to contribute to education and training in democratic ideals and practices, statements which were submitted in response to an inquiry from the Office of Education. With "zeal for democracy" as a focus, 32 institutions report recent curriculum revisions, 14 report specific efforts to improve the effectiveness of teaching courses, 75 report new courses, 75 report the operation of various types of forums, 62 mention definite efforts toward increased democratization in the administration of the institution. Some of these activities are briefly outlined in specific detail. The general impression gained from the reports is that many colleges are aware of their responsibilities, and some, at least, are aware that "democracy must be lived and not just dogmatically asserted."

TWO COLLEGES REPORT NEW fronts to be taken this fall by their respective departments of English.

The School of Business and Civic Administration of the College of the City of New York announces a new system, whereby members of their English department, headed by their chairman, Professor William G. Crane, will co-operate with instructors of business administration in examining term papers and reports submitted for advanced business-administration classes. Dr. Harry W. Rudman, who will serve as consultant to the business-administration department, will hold conferences with stu-

dents who turn in poorly written papers, and, if subsequent improvement is not shown, will recommend them for remedial English work. If the new system is successful, similar co-ordination with other departments of the college will be sought.

A program of study leading to an "honors degree" in English literature is being inaugurated this autumn at Cornell University for superior third-year students. Standard courses will be supplemented by advanced work in literary analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Instruction will be given in seminars limited to ten students. For honors candidates who are seniors, final examinations in English courses will be replaced by a comprehensive examination testing the candidate's grasp of certain major literary documents and historical tendencies in English literature and his ability to interpret critically examples of prose and verse.

THE EFFECT OF ENGLISH DEFICIENCY UPON A STUDENT'S ADJUSTMENT IN COLLEGE is a study by Robert H. Shaffer of first-, third-, and fifth-semester students at Indiana University. Students deficient in English but otherwise having sufficient ability to achieve a satisfactory record made distinctly poorer records in all subjects using books and somewhat poorer grades even in the nonbookish courses. These differences were greatest in the first semester and least in the fifth—not, Mr. Shaffer finds, because of withdrawals. In the first semester the English deficient were more dominant, more extroverted, better "adjusted" socially than the nondeficients, but these differences decreased or were reversed before the fifth semester by the improvement of the nondeficients and the retrogression of the deficient. Mr. Shaffer concludes that entering students deficient in English but otherwise qualified should be given remedial instruction. Obtain the pamphlet from Division of Research and Field Services, Indiana University, Bloomington, for fifty cents.

About Radio

THE ENTHUSIASM WITH WHICH the Committee on Radio has been received by the broadcasting industry encourages us to emphasize one important aspect of our work. The responsible leaders in radio are more than anxious that there be a demand for better programs and are delighted that we are making an effort to raise the level of taste and to relate education to this new dimension of communication.

Today radio is meeting a demand with a supply despite our feeling sometimes that they are foisting an inferior type of program upon us. But as time goes on with a steady diet of mediocrity, what will be the case? As the stereotype becomes the norm, there is less resilience and response to anything but the commonplace.

Radio cannot function without a knowledge of the listeners' demands and a feeling of their actual support and critical consciousness; therefore the industry must match its schedules with what they believe the listeners want. Here is where teachers of English must play an increasingly important role. We must be on the lookout for a complacency that equates the good with the popular. The pattern of behavior toward the broadcasters' programming policies is in grave danger of tending to shift responsibility to the sellers of soap and cigarettes. It is one of the listeners' duties to export his considered judgments. Why not have your next letter-writing exercise channeled toward the broadcasters? The importance the stations and advertising agencies attach to these letters cannot be overestimated.

We must disabuse our pupils of the ignorance being engendered by radio's flattering of the lowest common denominator of mass taste. When the audience responds to better programs, the radio industry will be among the happiest of us all. How much more proud are they of their documentaries than they are of their \$20,000 jack pots! Yet the latter claim ten to twenty times the audience, much to the chagrin of those leaders who take their public service responsibilities seriously.

We must increase our training in the fundamental disciplines of education by making fuller use of radio as an illustrative context. We can bring our classes to study the possible debasement of language and its social consequences. Apt illustrations can be found—especially in advertising plugs—of straight and crooked thinking, hanging comparisons, false analogy, abusive verbalisms, the overuse of the superlative, and the transference of terms of value to inappropriate contexts.

We can bring this area of literature and language before our classes for critical study. The medium itself, which claims an average of four hours of daily listening from high-school boys and girls, is a direct concern to us. Programs such as the "Ford Theater" on Friday, the "Theatre Guild" on Sundays, and the "Radio Theater" on Mondays can be criticised and the standards of taste raised. The study of literature can be enriched by the use of radio dramas, talks, forums, and documentaries just as the written language has been in English classes. The tyranny of time—making us subordinate our personal schedules to the hours of the broadcasts—is the one impediment; however, the increasingly wider use of recording devices will help us bring more and more of these shows into the classroom, where they can be used for careful study. The pupils can be helped to make out the plain sense of the broadcast; they can be led to build an appropriate sensuous apprehension; they can be stimulated to produce an appropriate imagery; they can diagnose irrelevant mnemonic intrusions; and they can be led through to a balanced sentimental response.

Wherein the influence of radio is good, we teachers of English must use it to our advantage; wherein it is bad and conflicts with the aims to which we have dedicated our teaching, it must be assailed. Furthermore, we must counter the feeling that maturity and literacy do not pay their way in radio by letting the broadcasters know that quality is listened to and is appreciated.

LEON C. HOOD
NCTE Radio Chairman

Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English

Hotel Stevens, Chicago

November 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 1948

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CONVENTION THEME: ENGLISH FOR MATURITY

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 9:30 A.M.-10:00 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM, 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 9:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

(*All members of the Council are invited to attend the board meetings*)

CONTINUOUS EXHIBIT OF MATERIALS AND AIDS FOR TEACHING

MEMBERS' TEA, 4:00-6:00 P.M.

GENERAL SESSION, 8:00-10:00 P.M.

Presiding, Lucia B. Mirrieles, University of Montana, Second Vice-President of the Council

Equilibrium with Variations—Marion C. Sheridan, New Haven High School, First Vice-President of the Council

Literature and Emotional Maturity—George Robert Carlsen, University of Colorado, Chairman of the Committee on Teacher Education

President's Address: English for Maturity—Thomas Clark Pollock, New York University

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26

GENERAL SESSION, 9:30-11:15 A.M.

Presiding, Thomas Clark Pollock, New York University, President of the Council

Report of Progress by the Commission on the English Curriculum

Moderator, Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota, Director of the Commission

Reports:

Angela M. Broening, Baltimore Public Schools, Associate Director of the Commission

Porter G. Perrin, University of Washington, Associate Director of the Commission

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NCTE

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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

LUNCHEON SESSIONS, 12:45-2:30 P.M.

NAJD LUNCHEON

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN: A LUNCHEON FOR LIBRARIANS AND TEACHERS
IN ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON CONFERENCES, 2:45-4:15 P.M.

In addition to the college meetings, there will be thirteen others grouped under the four general headings "I. Junior-Senior High School Sessions;" "II. Intergroup Education Presented at Three Levels;" "III. Elementary and Primary Sections;" and "IV. General Educational Problems."

V. COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

14. *Required Freshman English*

Presiding, John C. Gerber, University of Iowa

Three Views on Required Freshman English:

Josiah L. Geist, Wright Junior College, Chicago (15 min.)

George S. Wykoff, Purdue University (15 min.)

Paul D. Bagwell, Michigan State College (15 min.)

Discussion (5 min. each): Charles W. Roberts, University of Illinois; Weller Emblem, Coopér Union; Arthur M. Coons, Sampson College; S. Stewart Gordon, University of Chicago; Sarah Vinke, Montana State College; Thomas F. Dunn, Drake University

Questions and Comments from the Floor and Summary by the Chairman (25 min.)

15. *Undergraduate Preparation for High-School Teachers of English
and for College Teachers of English*

Presiding, Ida A. Jewett, Teachers College, Columbia University

Basic Philosophy—George Robert Carlsen, University of Colorado (15 min.)

Literature: Attitudes To Be Inculcated; Materials To Be Considered—Louise M. Rosenblatt, Brooklyn College (20 min.)

Training in Communication—George Murphy, Pennsylvania State College (20 min.)

Professional Training—Alfred Grommon, Stanford University (15 min.)

Discussion Leaders: Elizabeth W. Manwaring, Wellesley College; N. P. Tillman, Atlanta University; Neal Cross, Colorado State College of Education

16. *Learning Activities Geared for Adults*

Presiding, Lennox Grey, Teachers College, Columbia University

Adapting Language Arts to Workers' Needs—Elizabeth Irwin, Extension Service, University of Michigan (20 min.)

Ends and Means in Composition for Adults—Leroy H. Buckingham, Cooper Union
Literature for the Community College—William R. Wood, Community College, Evanston, Illinois.

ANNUAL DINNER, 6:30-9:30 P.M.

The Poetic Process—Karl Shapiro, Johns Hopkins University, author of *V-Letter*, of *Person, Place and Thing*, and of *Essay on Rime*

Folk Song: U.S.A.—Alan Lomax, Ballad Editor, Decca Records, co-author of *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly*, *Our Singing Country*, *The One Hundred and One Best American Ballads*

Good Tidings of Great Joy—James A. Michener, author of *Tales of the South Pacific* (1948 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

BREAKFAST FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVES, 8:00 A.M.

SECTION MEETINGS, 9:30-11:30 A.M.

[Meetings will be held separately as usual for the elementary- and high-school sections. Program for the college section will be as follows:]

Topic: The Graduate Study of English: Preparation for Research or for Teaching?
Presiding, Tremaine McDowell, University of Minnesota

What Training Fits the Needs of Majors in English?—James F. Fullington, Chairman of the Department of English, the Ohio State University

What Training Fits the Needs of Liberal Arts Colleges?—Dean Earl J. McGrath, College of Liberal Arts, State University of Iowa

What Can the Graduate Schools Do?—Dean Theodore C. Blegen, Graduate School, University of Minnesota

ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 12:15 P.M.

Presentation of Radio Awards

The Literature of Political Disillusionment—Sidney Hook, New York University, author of *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy*; *The Hero in History*; *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*; *Education for Modern Man*

Address—A. B. Guthrie, Jr., University of Kentucky, author of the novel, *Big Sky*

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 4:00-6:00 AND 8:00-10:00 P.M.

[N.B. Send for your room reservations *at once* to the Hotel Stevens, Chicago, Illinois, stating that you are a Council member.]

Books

POETIC IMAGERY

Rosemond Tuve's *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*² is one of those rare books which one can justly say every student of the period concerned should read. That the sixteenth-century student made a more systematic study of logic and rhetoric than we have any experience of has been for some time known, but it has remained for Miss Tuve to develop the consequences of that fact for our understanding of Elizabethan and metaphysical imagery.

She is admirably equipped to do so. She has a very extensive knowledge of the rhetoric and the logic of the time, of both the traditional and the Ramistic type. Indeed, her book provides an admirable introduction to the subject for the student who has never taken the time and pains to endeavor to penetrate the mysteries of those two critical subjects.

Very wisely, Miss Tuve has, in general, avoided the pitfall of suggesting that the poet consciously puts into practice what the theorist prescribes. Rather, she suggests that the poet, like every other educated man of the time, studied both the rhetoric and the logic of his day, not only in theory, but by means of prescribed exercises. When he came to write poetry, the standards of taste and judgment which he had formed in that process inevitably influenced his conception of his undertaking and the way in which he set about realizing it. Moreover, that training had equipped him with certain technical resources which he found ready at hand, and when the reader who had likewise done those exercises in his school days read the poet's works, he knew what to look for and how to understand it.

While Miss Tuve, in her anxiety to keep clear of any anachronistic use of current

² Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.
\$6.00.

theories of the unconscious, carefully avoids using our conceptions of the relation of theory and practice, she clearly recognizes that the sixteenth-century poet did not write by rule any more than his twentieth-century successor. But she does use her remarkably broad and firm grasp of sixteenth-century rhetorical and logical theory to make the sixteenth-century poet's objects and methods more readily apprehensible to us. She is able to do this because she is very broadly oriented, also, in contemporary poetic theory and practice. She succeeds admirably in clarifying the major differences between that time and this, especially in the crucial matter of didacticism. Some of her implied criticisms of contemporary poetic will be judged by a good many people to be not entirely fair, mainly because she has largely overleaped the exaggerations and degenerations of the Renaissance point of view, against some of which—but by no means all—romantic and symbolist aesthetic quite understandably rebelled.

There will be a good deal of discussion of Miss Tuve's failure to develop the distinction between Elizabethan and metaphysical imagery. She certainly makes her case that much of what has been considered characteristic of metaphysical image-making is to be found in essence in the Elizabethan poets, and she is doubtless right that in our exploitation of the differences we have probably tended to overlook both the gradualism and the continuity of the development between the two styles. But the fact remains that there is a difference between the characteristic imagery of the representative Elizabethan poet and the characteristic imagery of the representative metaphysical poet.

Miss Tuve repeatedly admits as much, and she herself makes some very interesting contributions to the discussion of metaphysical imagery. One of the most interest-

ing is the suggestion that, while there is nothing new in the juxtaposition of the grand and the prosaic in religious literature, the "foreshortening which occurs when these ancient ideas are crowded into the short scope of the devotional lyric . . . makes for a certain seeming-new sharpness and terse precision." And her analysis of the Ramistic reorganization of rhetoric and logic, with its cutting-off of the old divisions of invention and disposition from rhetoric, is a very suggestive one for the understanding of the development of metaphysical imagery. But her habit of moving from Elizabethan to metaphysical poets and back without much discrimination, coupled with her failure to treat systematically and extensively in one place the relations of the two styles, does lay her open to the charge that she fails to appreciate what is an undeniable, even if often exaggerated, distinction.

A certain fondness for negative and even backhanded statement makes some of Miss Tuve's distinctions more difficult to follow than need be. The organization of the individual paragraphs within the chapters hardly does justice to the clarity and the incisiveness of Miss Tuve's discriminations. It is not an easy book to read, but it is a very illuminating and rewarding one.

HELEN C. WHITE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

MODERN PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

This book,¹ by thirteen different authors, presents the modern drama of Europe and the Americas by countries or groups of countries. There is a reading list of eighteen pages, mostly of books about the drama. The Index of seventy-two pages adds greatly to the value of the book and is especially impressive from the innumerable titles of plays listed, those from foreign languages being given in their original form (at least those from French, German, Italian, and Spanish are, but not, fortunately, from

¹ Barrett H. Clark and George Freedley (eds.). *A History of Modern Drama*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1947. Pp. xii+852. \$5.00.

Russian and other less familiar languages) and also translated into English, whether or not the plays themselves have been translated. When the plays have been translated, this is usually specifically stated, a welcome assistance. The subjects of many plays are given, sometimes the plots are briefly told, the judgments expressed seem firsthand and well considered, and the lives of important authors are presented at some length—those of Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, are notably good examples. Thus, much of the book is interesting to read straight along, but it will probably be particularly useful as a guide to which plays to read, and for reference—provided its data can be depended on. Unfortunately, on one page (167) occur Florence Foss for Florence Farr and Elizabeth Robbins for Elizabeth Robins. I have noted no other page so inaccurate, and, in a book written, as this is, by various authors, one page should not be given too much weight.

A book, even on this generous scale, on so broad a subject avoids with difficulty becoming only a listing of authors and their plays, and some of the chapters scarcely escape this, especially when dealing with recent plays. Mr. Clark describes the book as, by intention, not primarily analysis or criticism but "a record of the plays written and produced in modern times." Certainly, however, a history must not merely record but must also point out a pattern of development and discuss trends and influences; not all such discussion merits Mr. Clark's repeated and often justified criticism of forced judgments (e.g., pp. 641-42). Fortunately, Mr. Clark and some of his collaborators, especially those dealing with the major countries—notably, in the chapters on Scandinavia, Germany, France, Russia, and Spain—do discover a real pattern for their respective countries. The book would, I think, have gained from an introductory chapter indicating the course of the development in modern drama as a whole, even if no more than pointing out the discarding of worn-out, ignoble artificialities under the influence of realism; then, the almost com-

plete dominance of the realistic ideal, sometimes only superficial, but sometimes going on to naturalism; and, then, the breaking-away from realistic rigidity into more varied forms. If such a chapter had been included, it would also, almost certainly, have supplied what is now lacking—the clear definition of basic terms. For example, expressionism, though given twenty-four entries in the Index (two, p. 44 and p. 69, are omitted) never is precisely defined. Such a chapter would also have made more clear the importance of certain influences now left obscure. Even if one looks up in the Index all the fifteen references to Scribe (one, p. 22, is omitted), he would scarcely become aware of how powerful that influence was or, indeed, of what it precisely consisted.

But perhaps the chief omission from the book is some consideration of the influence on the drama of the theater itself, of its financial arrangements, of the actors in it, and, especially, of the audiences for whom the drama was written. Of course this is an intentional omission. But can a satisfactory history of drama be provided if these influences are not considered along with the more precisely literary ones?

Not to close, however, on a note of even mild objection, I must emphasize that the book does provide much information hard to come by, and that it shows in admirable fashion the great variety and interest of these plays of our time. I know no other book on the subject so comprehensive or so well arranged for easy use.

GEORGE F. REYNOLDS

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

MENCKEN ON POOLEY ON USAGE

When, in the *English Journal* for May, 1918, the lamented Sterling Andrus Leonard flung his first challenge at the classroom grammarians, he started a revolution that has been rolling on ever since, and gathering strength as it rolls. Of its leaders none has been more audacious or more effective than

his old student, Robert C. Pooley. Dr. Pooley's frequent writings on the subject (boiled down to the compass of a single small book¹) have not only provided a great deal of matériel for the rebel armament; they have also had a large influence upon the strategy and tactics of the war. It is no longer sufficient to poke fun at the poor schoolma'am, dismally clanking her rayon chains: there is now a formidable body of facts, scientifically arrived at, which throw many new beams of light upon the anatomy and physiology of English and so ease and rationalize its functioning as a medium of communication.

Dr. Pooley throws overboard as meaningless most of the traditional criteria for estimating language. It is folly, he says, to follow precedents blindly, for usage changes constantly, and sometimes very quickly. It is equal folly to seek the authority of analogy, for language is extraordinarily lawless, and nearly all its rules have exceptions. Finally, it is folly doubly foolish to look to literary guidance, for all authors of any pretensions, when they soar in the high realm of their fancies with their garlands and singing robes about them, depart so frequently and so far from the ordinary speech of their time and place (and of themselves) that what they write sometimes becomes, in essential particulars, a foreign language.

Dr. Pooley cites Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as an example. It is magnificent, but anyone who sought to use it as a model of everyday speech would be open to the derision of far more than the vulgar. So, also, in the other direction: what is meet and proper on a college campus or even in a college classroom would be grossly indecorous in a bull by a bishop or at an Elks' lodge of sorrow. It is, in every case, a matter of levels—of the fitting, the proper, the natural, the congruous, and, above all, the agreeable. To the examination and differentiation of these levels Dr. Pooley has applied himself

¹ Robert C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage*. National Council of Teachers of English Monograph No. 16. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1946. Pp. 265.

for many years and with unfailing learning and good sense. He discusses them at length in the present collection of his papers and always wisely. He is no mere iconoclast but a scholar who savors to the full the extraordinary richness and variety of his native tongue, and what he has to say about it is

always worth hearing. In part he addresses himself specifically to the teacher condemned to wrestle with linguistic moronity, but his discourse is equally valuable to every other person who speaks English.

H. L. MENCKEN

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Brief Reviews

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

FOR THE GENERAL READER

Shannon's Way. By A. J. CRONIN. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

Shall Robert Shannon (of *The Green Years*) marry the girl he loves or carry on the medical research which so ardently appeals to him? To add to his dilemma there is a religious conflict—the girl is a chapel and Shannon is a Roman Catholic. By the author of *The Citadel* and *Keys of the Kingdom*. August Literary Guild selection.

Woman with a Sword: The Biographical Novel of Anne Carroll. By HOLLISTER NOBLE. Doubleday. \$3.00.

It was Anne Carroll, Lincoln's personal investigator (of the Maryland Carrolls) who, according to "long buried historical facts," planned an attack upon the South through the Tennessee River. A long novel of Civil War politics and an added love interest. The facts are sometimes called "a lost chapter" in Civil War history, although mentioned by Carl Sandburg and others.

Divided. By RALPH FREEDMAN. Dutton. \$3.50.

Winner of the 1947 Lewis and Clark Northwest Award. The author was born in Germany, came to the United States in 1940, served in the United States Army in Tunisia and Italy. The scene of his novel is a small Austrian town occupied by an American force, whose duty it is to destroy a powerful nest of Nazis.

Georgiana. By MAUDE HUTCHINS. New Directions. \$2.50.

This is Georgiana's story—as child, schoolgirl, and adult. It is a strange story—strangely told—but Georgiana was a very unusual person, a Virginia orphan who grew up in the New England home of her grandfather. There were boy cousins, and Georgiana confused her later loves with a cousin and her grandfather. An unconventional novel, Joycean in style, Freudian in flavor.

Toward the Morning. By HERVEY ALLEN. Rinehart. \$3.00.

This is Book Three of a narrative which is to comprise five books. *The Forest* and *The Fort* have been published. *Toward the Morning* tells of Salathiel

Albine's progress from Bedford Village to Philadelphia, 1764-65. Albine was the adopted white son of an Indian chief. The completed project will cover the history of the frontier through the post-Revolutionary period. September Literary Guild selection.

The Old Beauty and Others. By WILLA CATHER. Knopf. \$2.50.

"The Old Beauty" is a study of a woman who has been very beautiful but is now old and faded. It is an original and tense story. "The Best Years" is Miss Cather's last story, set in the Nebraska farm country which she loved. "Before Breakfast" is the keen, grim story of a successful man's failure to live. Readers who have felt Miss Cather's charm will welcome this view of her aging personality as expressed in these stories.

A Candle for St. Jude. By RUMER GODDEN. Viking. \$2.75.

The ballet school of Madame Holbein, the proud old prima ballerina, in the little world of its own provides love, ambition, and clashing temperaments for this artfully told tale. By the author of *Black Narcissus*, *Take Three Tenses*, etc.

The Heart of the Matter. By GRAHAM GREENE. Viking. \$3.00.

A story of a man's inner conflict. Scobie was a British police officer in a west coast African town. A Catholic in faith, enmeshed in lies and intrigue, with an unloved wife and a very young girl who needed him—what could he do? The African background is of particular interest.

The Plague. By ALBERT CAMUS. Knopf. \$3.00.

A passage from Defoe faces the title page. The story (a parable) is of the visitation of bubonic plague in Oran, a North African city. The worst and best are brought out in men as, overnight, the city becomes a charnel house. Man has more good than evil in him, says Camus, but ignorance unbalances the scale. "Each of us has the plague within him." The author employs irony and symbolism to make clear his ideas.

The Invisible Island. By IRWIN STACK. Viking. \$3.00.

The author is a young teacher in the New York public-school system. His hero is a teacher of English

in a modern high school in Harlem. This is a grim and sincere study of a conscientious young liberal teaching unhappy Negro boys.

Ghost Town on the Yellowstone. By ELLIOT PAUL. Random. \$3.50.

Second volume of the author's memoirs. Pioneers in Trembles, Montana, furnish characters found only in the "woolly West" era of adventure and hilarity.

State of Mind: A Boston Reader. Edited by ROBERT N. LINSCOTT. Farrar, Straus.

Chronologically arranged selections from Cotton Mather to J. P. Marquand. The first of a series of "City and Country Readers" to be published by Farrar, Straus.

Road to Survival. By WILLIAM VOGT. Sloane. \$4.00.

Man's so-called conquest of nature is branded as a critical abuse of the earth from which we receive our food. The author, an authority on conservation and land usage, is convinced that the world's too rapidly growing population may find our food supply insufficient unless active measures are taken to conserve our resources. His book deserves careful reading. Fortunately it is arousing public interest.

Harnessing the Earthworm. By DR. THOMAS J. BARNETT. Bruce Humphries. \$2.50.

Soil-building through "nature's richest humus factory." The lowly earthworm comes into his own. This book should be read with *Road to Survival*.

Indonesia: Once More Free Labor. By MULTATULI (EDUARD DOUWES DEKKER). Translated from the Dutch by NICOLAAS STEELINK. Exposition Press. \$2.50.

A spirited attack upon the abuse of native tribes and peoples in the Indies and the rigorous censorship maintained by the Dutch. First published in 1860.

Negro Voices in American Fiction. By HUGH MORRIS GLOSTER. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. \$3.50.

An account of published novels and short stories by Negroes from the beginnings to 1940; the life and thought of the race and the social backgrounds from which the writers came. Characters and settings are of particular interest.

The Portable Hawthorne. Edited by MALCOLM COWLEY. Viking. \$2.00.

Scarlet Letter complete. Thirteen stories, passages from notebooks, journals, and letters. Critical evaluation by the editor.

The Heiress. By RUTH and AUGUSTUS GOETZ. Dramatists Play Service. \$2.50.

A popular Broadway play suggested by Henry James's novel, *Washington Square*.

Strange Prehistoric Animals and Their Stories. By A. HYATT VERRILL. L. C. Page. \$3.75.

Descriptions of weird, comic, grotesque ancestors of the animals we know today, and tales of those other creatures which have their place in legend and primitive religions. Myth, fantasy, and science blend in this very interesting book. Illustrated by the author.

The Cantos of Ezra Pound. New Directions. \$5.00.

In this volume are the eighty-four (of one hundred planned) Cantos which have been completed to date, including "The Pisan Cantos," which were composed during Pound's incarceration in a World War II prison camp near Pisa. Warmly praised by Tate, Eliot, Aiken, Ransom, W. C. Williams, Schwartz, Eberhart, Robert Lowell, Theodore Spencer, and Horace Gregory, in spite of the author's war record.

Emily Dickinson's Poems. 1st and 2d ser. Edited by MABEL LOOMIS TODD and T. W. HIGGINSON. World Publishing Co. \$1.25.

Printed as they originally appeared in 1890-91. 281 poems. Introduction by Carl Van Doren.

Reference Point. By ARTHUR HOPKINS. French. \$2.50.

A series of papers on the theater, chiefly those read by the author at the 1947 Summer Theater Seminar sponsored by Fordham University.

Some Sources of Southernisms. By M. M. MATHEWS. University of Alabama Press. \$2.50.

Three types of words added to the vocabulary of the South: some from the Mexican Indian (Nahuatl), some from the Muskogee (Creek), some brought by slaves from Africa. Expanded from lectures delivered at Alabama College. Interesting.

From the Heart of Europe. By F. O. MATTHIESSEN. Oxford University Press. \$3.00.

"I want to write about some of the things it means to be an American today. That is the chief thing I came to Europe to think about." With twenty-five Harvard students, Matthiessen administered the Salzburg seminar in American studies. He visited Paris, Prague, Hungary and writes an intimate, significant, and very readable journal of his impressions and the need for social understanding.

Americans from Japan. By BRADFORD SMITH. ("Peoples of America Series.") Lippincott. \$5.00.

A study of the Japanese in America from 1844, when they first came to the United States, to the present time. Sympathetic, appreciative.

America through British Eyes. Compiled and edited by ALLAN NEVINS. Oxford University Press. \$6.00.

A panoramic view of American society, manners, and institutions covering a period of 160 years, as seen through British eyes. Such older writers as Dickens, Trollope, Matthew Arnold, Fanny Kemble, and many others are represented. Among more recent travelers are J. Alfred Spender, Mary Agnes Hamilton, Graham Hutton, and Lord Tweedsmuir. Naturally, many are flattering, amusing, and interpretive, while others are sharply critical.

South Seas: Anatomy of Paradise. By J. C. FURNAS. Sloane. \$5.00.

Facts and legends of the South Seas. The part the white man has played in the history of the South Sea Islands and the more colorful life of the natives. Photographs and bibliography. Good.

Where I Was Born and Raised. By DAVID L. COHN. Houghton. \$4.00.

The first part of this book was published in 1935 as *God Shakes Creation*. Most Southerners accept this description of the Delta, the people, and their problems as an unbiased study of the race problem. Cohn has revisited the Delta to learn the effect of the last ten years upon the people and industry. He found great changes due to the war, the times, and the invention of the cotton picker.

The Double Axe and Other Poems. By ROBINSON JEFFERS. Random. \$2.75.

Narrative and short poems. A belligerent isolationist, Jeffers defines his attitude in the Preface. The shedding of American blood in World War II, he says, was motivated by ambition, power, and vanity. Gripping and powerful; controversial.

The Armed Vision. By STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN. Knopf. \$5.00.

Defining "modern criticism" (of the last twenty-five years) as "the organized use of non-literary techniques and bodies of knowledge to obtain insights into literature," Mr. Hyman concludes that the "ideal" critic would apply all the techniques thoroughly, but admits that no man could know enough to do so and that only one or a few of the most appropriate techniques would be emphasized on any one work. He describes the emphasis of different techniques by a dozen (most of them eminent) critics, and a large part of the value of the book is these interpretations and evaluations.

A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics. By DAVID DAICHES. Cornell University Press. \$2.75.

Daiches' basic question, "Why read literature?" leads quickly to another, "What is literature?" He makes several attempts at definition, stressing illumination of "man's fate," insisting that the writing must be "symbolic" rather than merely illustrative, declaring that in the real artist content and pattern are conceived simultaneously. Chapter vii, "The Nature of Poetry," includes a twenty-three-page explication of "Lycidas."

A Little Treasury of American Poetry. Edited by OSCAR WILLIAMS. Scribner. \$3.75.

Twelve pages of American Indian poetry, 700 of the "chief poets from colonial times to the present" (half of this to our older contemporaries), and 100 pages of poetry of the forties. John Malcolm Brinnin gets the same space as O. W. Holmes, John Berryman as H. W. Longfellow. Pound, Eliot, Crane, Aiken, and Auden are favored, and Whitman fills 90 pages.

American Essays. Edited by CHARLES B. SHAW. New American Library (formerly Penguin). Pp. 178. \$0.35.

A new collection representing twenty authors by a single essay each, from Benjamin Franklin's "Titan Leeds Hoax" to Morley, De Voto, and Pratt. Humorous and humorless, literary, social, scientific—all kinds are here.

Call Me Ishmael. By CHARLES OLSON. Reynal. \$2.50.

A symbolic, ejaculatory, somewhat disconnected interpretation of Melville's *Moby Dick*. Olson has examined the set of Shakespeare which Melville read and annotated between the writing of the comparatively commonplace first draft of *Moby Dick* and the writing of the book as we have it. Olson gives Shakespeare credit for inspiring Melville to tragedy and for much of the structure of *Moby Dick*. Full understanding of the commentary requires thorough familiarity with the details of the story and with Melville's incidental philosophizing.

Remembered Weather. By LEONE RICE GRELL. Macmillan. Pp. 83. \$2.50.

Gentle, direct lyrics in conventional forms about rural sights, sounds, and sentiments. Only the country-experienced can image the things the author names and feel with her.

Forms of Modern Fiction. Edited by WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR. University of Minnesota Press. \$4.50.

Essays collected in honor of Joseph Warren Beach. Critical studies of modern writers' experiments with forms and techniques. A number of the essays are by Joseph Warren Beach.

Writers for Tomorrow. Edited by BAXTER HATHAWAY. Cornell University Press. \$2.75.

"A collection of fiction by writers of tomorrow for readers of today. From the Writers' Workshops of Cornell University. What young writers are thinking and writing about."

The Journals of André Gide. Vol. II: 1914-27. Translated and annotated by JUSTIN O'BRIEN. Knopf. \$6.00.

Gide discusses the future of Europe, has a dialogue with the devil, compares France and Germany, studies the Jewish question, and asserts his opinions

of Freud, Pascal, Baudelaire, and many other people and subjects in 462 pages.

The Two Worlds of Marcel Proust. By HAROLD MARCH. University of Pennsylvania Press. \$3.50.

For the general reader, "a full, frank, and unbiased account of the man and his work and a clear statement of what he has to say to the world today."

The Best One-Act Plays of 1947-48. Edited by MARGARET MAYORGA. Dodd, Mead. \$3.00.

Eleventh annual issue. Comments by the editor, biographical and bibliographical material.

The Other House. By HENRY JAMES. New Directions. \$3.00.

Introduction by Leon Edel tells how the story was first written as a play.

The Portable Swift. Edited by CARL VAN DOREN. Viking. \$2.00.

Including the best of his essays, poems, letters, journals, and *Gulliver's Travels* complete.

Modern French Short Stories. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. New Directions. \$3.00.

This collection (fourteen stories) is an indication of the vitality and variety of French literature of the present day. André Gide, St.-Exupéry, are among those represented.

Orpheus: A Symposium of the Arts. Vol. I. Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. New Directions.

Poems, essays, articles on painting and drama, examples of arts and letters in England and western Europe today.

The Mediterranean: Its Role in America's Foreign Policy. By WILLIAM REITZEL. Harcourt. \$2.50.

Issued by the Yale Institute of International Studies.

Tales of Horror and the Supernatural. By ARTHUR MACHEN. Knopf. \$3.95. Edited and with Introduction by PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN. Note by ROBERT HILLVER.

First published early in this century.

The Pickwick Papers. By CHARLES DICKENS. Introduction by Bernard Darwin. With original illustrations. Oxford. \$3.50.

Pilgrim's Progress. By JOHN BUNYAN. De luxe edition. Illustrated by CLARKE HUTTON. Macmillan. \$3.75.

Faithful to the original while eliminating unnecessary reading difficulties.

Prescott's the Conquest of Mexico. Designed for modern reading. Abridged by MARSHALL MCCLINTOCK. Messner. \$5.00.

Footnotes and philosophical digressions omitted. End maps. Twelve-point type.

Cotton in My Ears. By FRANCES WARFIELD. Viking. \$2.75.

Gay story of a girl who, after her hearing was impaired at the age of four, tried for many years to keep her deafness a secret.

Malabar Farm. By LOUIS BROMFIELD. Harper. \$3.75.

Readers of *Pleasant Valley* and anyone interested in farming, food production, or land conservation will find much information in this account of Pleasant Valley brought up to date. Bromfield writes also of people, of wild life, of politics, and of customs in other lands. He has great faith in his well-loved France.

Peony. By PEARL S. BUCK. John Day Co. \$3.00.

The acceptance and absorption of the Jews by the Chinese a century ago forms the background of the story of a Chinese handmaid, playmate and first love of David, a Jewish lad. Literary Guild June selection.

The Hatfields and the McCoys. By VIRGIL CARRINGTON JONES. University of North Carolina Press. \$3.75.

The story of two feuding families that has (or is about to) become classic folklore. The trouble began over a pig in 1870 on the Virginia-Kentucky line. Mr. Jones has visited the region, has consulted court records and newspaper confessions, and has talked with old residents who remember. Doctors, lawyers, a governor, and a United States senator stem from these families. A picture taken in 1928 shows a Hatfield and a McCoy just after they have shaken hands, the feud over.

The Foolish Gentlewoman. By MARGERY SHARP. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

Christopher Morley says of this whimsical story of an English household: "We have been starved for novels like this." Book-of-the-Month choice for June.

The World Is Not Enough. By ZOE OLDENBOURG. Pantheon. \$3.75.

A brilliant novel of adventure, romance, and history laid in twelfth-century France. It teems with characters whose problems are not too different from those of our own day. An account of the Crusades is of glowing interest.

The Flames of Time. By BAYNARD KENDRICK. Scribner. \$3.00.

Spain was losing her hold on Florida; British, Yankees, and outlaws were warring for the territory. A historical novel of color, romance, and adventure. Literary Guild selection for July.

The Song in the Green Thorn Tree. By JAMES BARKE. Macmillan. \$3.50.

The Wind That Shakes the Barley was the first of this author's novels having Burns as hero. It described the poet's childhood. This second story covers the two years during which his greatest poetry was written and his love affairs with Mary Campbell and Betty ran their course. Two more Burns novels are to follow.

Days of Promise. By LOUIS STEVENS. Prentice-Hall. \$3.50.

Time: 1865-1939. David MacAllister, a southern-born aristocrat, fought with the federal army. His Virginia-born wife sympathized with his ideal although the war cost her two brothers. The South did not receive the returned soldier kindly; he turned his face to the Middle West. Four generations of MacAllisters make the story an exciting one of frontier life, of enemies, lynching, and wheat growing. New York, Paris, Berlin, and Petrograd have a place in the life of David's descendants. Long, colorful, democratic.

Fire. By GEORGE R. STEWART. Random. \$3.00.

By the author of *Storm*, *Names on the Land*, etc. Mr. Stewart worked in co-operation with the United States Forest Service in California for two fire seasons in preparation for writing *Fire*—the story of a forest fire. This one was started by lightning, smoldered, revived, and became a raging, destructive fire lasting for eleven days. How supervisors, look-outs, fire crews, and volunteers fought to control its advance is a dramatic story.

An Anthology of the New England Poets. Edited by LOUIS UNTERMEYER. Random. \$3.95.

From Colonial times to the present day. Writings from more than thirty poets. Foreword and Introduction, biographical and critical commentaries by the editor.

Losses. By RANDALL JARRELL. Harcourt, \$2.00.

Thirty new poems and an older long narrative poem.

Ebony Rhythm. Edited by BEATRICE M. MURPHY. Exposition Press. \$3.00.

An anthology of verse by one hundred contemporary Negro poets.

The Second World War: The Gathering Storm. By WINSTON S. CHURCHILL. Houghton. \$6.00.

Churchill told his story of World War I in *World Crisis*, *Eastern Front*, and *Aftermath*. The first volume of his World War II story covers the time between the false peace and Hitler's success just before Dunkirk and the events which led to Churchill's becoming premier. Dramatic, shrewd, witty, courageous. Book-of-the-Month July choice.

The Goebbels Diaries. Translated and edited by LOUIS P. LOCHNER. Doubleday. \$4.00.

The "Publisher's Note," telling of the finding of this lengthy personal diary, is of great interest. Written during 1942-43, this seems to be an accurate record of the evil plans of Hitler and his subordinates, although Goebbels was a great liar. In political interest probably second only to Churchill's book.

All Our Years: The Autobiography of Robert Morss Lovett. Viking. \$3.75.

In striking contrast to Churchill's story of war and its causes, of Goebbels' confessions of cruelty and cunning, is this life-story of an educator, editor, and public figure. Dedicated to his thirty thousand students.

Personal Equation: An Autobiography. By ALBERT GUERARD. Norton. \$3.50.

The French-born author of *A Preface to World Literature* writes primarily of the way in which the world has impinged upon his own feelings but depicts that world clearly. He writes of France from his boyhood spent there and of his beloved adopted country with passionate criticism. A liberal book.

My Life as a Teacher. By JOHN ERSKINE. Lippincott. \$3.50.

Experiences covering nearly a half-century as an educator at Amherst College, at Columbia University, and at the American University at Beaune following World War I. Sparkling, critical, humorous, confident.

What Comes of Training Women for War. By DOROTHY SCHAFFTER. American Council on Education. \$3.00.

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A Study of Franz Kafka: The Frozen Sea. By CHARLES NEIDER. Oxford. \$3.50.

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The American Language: Supplement Two. By H. L. MENCKEN. Knopf. \$7.50.

Final volume; a digest of materials collected since 1936 on the last five chapters of *The American*

Language. "The Pronunciation of America," "American Spelling," "The Common Speech," "Proper Names in America," and "American Slang."

FOR THE TEACHER

Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth. United States Office of Education, Washington 25, D.C. Paper. Offset. Pp. 122.

In effect, this is the first report of the Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, organized by the Office of Education and sure to influence high-school curriculums profoundly. It is concerned with the 60 per cent of our young people who do not finish high school and assumes that the basic reason for their nonattendance or dropping out is the unsuitability of the curriculum to their needs. Specifically, it proposes less dependence upon book instruction and much "simpler" aims than present ones in teaching speaking, writing, reading, and literature. The importance of listening is stated but nothing more said about it. Integration, either through a Common Learnings course or through genuine (and expensive) co-operation of subject teachers, is assumed. *Education for All American Youth* and B. L. Dodds's *That All May Learn* are cited frequently.

Education for International Understanding in American Schools. By the Committee on International Relations of the NEA, the ASCD, and the NCSS. National Education Association. Pp. 241. \$1.00.

The results of a two-year study financed by the NEA and the Carnegie Corporation of New York to decide why and what our schools should do about international understanding. Chiefly expository, with some information and a little illustrative narrative.

Large Was Our Bounty. 1948 Yearbook of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. ASCD, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington 6, D.C. Pp. 216. \$2.50.

A study of what the schools can and should do about conservation of our natural resources.

Speech Correction Methods. By STANLEY AINSWORTH. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 149. \$2.75.

A manual to synthesize for practical use varied information obtained from basic textbooks in speech pathology, for those who have a knowledge of principles and even of devices but no program.

Frontiers of American Culture. By JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS. Scribner. Pp. 364. \$2.50.

In his "story of adult education in America" Adams has included the educational effects (sometimes unintentional) of nonscholastic agencies like the W.C.T.U., Rotary, and mail-order catalogues. Chiefly a record rather than a plan for action.

Education for What Is Real. By EARL C. KELLEY. Harper. Pp. 114. \$2.00.

A report on certain findings of the Hanover Institute (formerly the Dartmouth Eye Institute) resulting from experiments in the realm of vision and in the nature of perception and of knowing. John Dewey, who contributes the Foreword, considers this a work whose significance "will prove virtually inexhaustible."

FOR THE STUDENT

100 American Poems. Edited by SELDEN RODMAN. New American Library (Formerly Penguin). Pp. 184. \$0.35.

Not a reprint but an untraditional, even rebellious selection from Edward Taylor (1644-1729) to Robert Lowell. In a twenty-five-page Introduction the editor blisters popular American taste in poetry and the anthologizing of conventional choices. Emerson, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson are given four to six pages each, Whitman thirteen, while Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bryant, Holmes, Poe get no more than two. Even the devotee of poetry will examine with interest the Introduction and the Table of Contents.

FOR THE TEACHER AND STUDENT

Chaucer's World. Compiled by EDITH RICKERT. Edited by CLAIR C. OLSON and MARTIN M. CROW. Illustrations selected by MARGARET RICKERT. Columbia University Press. Pp. 456. \$6.75.

A fascinating, expertly arranged collection of excerpts from medieval records, public and private documents, and literature illustrating and describing the life Chaucer knew in fourteenth-century England and France. Most of the material has never been translated or published before. It is presented under the major categories of London life, the home, training and education, careers, entertainment, travel, war, the rich and the poor, religion, and death and burial. This volume provides a rich feast for the student of Chaucer, but, more than that, it presents stories and records of so much human interest that it could easily persuade the general reader into an understanding of life outside his own immediate experience.

An Interpretation of Shakespeare. By HARDIN CRAIG. Dryden Press. Pp. 400.

This book does exactly what its title says: the author interprets Shakespeare in a series of essays which are no less sound and scholarly because they are lucid and enjoyable. It is historical criticism of the best sort. With imaginative insight, Professor Craig helps the reader to see with the eyes of an

Elizabethan and also to see what the emotional and intellectual content of the plays can mean to us today. He believes in the unity of Shakespeare; he believes that Shakespeare was not mere imitator or adapter but an original creative artist; he believes that the plays usually neglected are far greater than they are thought to be and are important in building up a true image of Shakespeare. The result is an illuminating of many dark regions and a more distinct portrait of the dramatist at work.

A Literary History of England. Edited by ALBERT C. BAUGH. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 1673. \$7.50.

This history has been written by five contributors under the general editorship of Professor Baugh. The chapter on the Old English period is by Kemp Malone; the Middle English period, by Albert C. Baugh; the Renaissance, by Tucker Brooks; the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, by George Sherburn; and the Nineteenth Century and After, by Samuel C. Chew. The purpose is to provide a comprehensive history of the literature of England that is both scholarly and readable. This the book does and also provides generous footnotes to significant biographical and critical works.

American Universities and Colleges. Edited by A. J. BRUMBAUGH. 5th (1948) ed. American Council on Education. Pp. 1054. \$8.00.

Descriptive directory of 820 accredited four-year colleges and universities. This edition contains new sections on veterans and foreign students, and information about curriculum, fees, faculty, housing, etc., has been considerably extended.

American Junior Colleges. Edited by JESSE P. BOGUE. 2d (1948) ed. American Council on Education. Pp. 537. \$6.50.

Describes 564 accredited junior colleges. Part I gives the early history of the junior-college movement, its development, present status, and possible trends. Part II gives the factual data on curriculum, fees, requirements, etc.

The Rise of Silas Lapham. By WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS. With an Introduction by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES. Oxford University Press. Pp. 386. \$1.45. 1948.

A new, pocket-sized volume in "The World's Classics" series. Three others which have appeared in the same series during the last eighteen months are: *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James (pp. 680, \$2.45); *The Egoist* by George Meredith (pp. 564, \$2.45); and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* by Anthony Trollope (pp. 928, \$2.45). All have excellent introductions, are well printed on good paper, and are

light and easy to carry. The mere format should help put these Victorian novels back into general circulation and should help the present generation of students to discover that Howells, for example, is not just a name in a history of American literature but, in *Silas Lapham*, the author of a novel about Back Bay Boston that has as much vitality as *The Late George Apley*.

Children and Books. By MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT. Scott, Foresman. Pp. 626. School ed. \$3.60; trade ed., \$5.00.

A delightful and helpful book for anyone interested in children's reading, written by an authority

on books for children. Actually, it is a textbook for children's literature courses in teachers' colleges and library-training schools, but it is much more than that. Mrs. Arbutnot's enthusiasm, broad knowledge, and understanding of children make it a treasure for anyone who wants to know what kind of books children like and how to get children to read more and better books. It covers the interests of children from two to fifteen and considers every type of reading the child enjoys except his "textbooks." Criteria are presented for each type of reading, and selections from many fine books are included. The volume also includes many classroom photographs, children's drawings, and illustrations from juvenile books.

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